

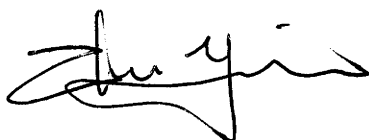
**A Study of Genre in Chinese Business Communication:
Sales Genres Used in Mainland China**

**by
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A thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of
The Australian National University
January 1998

Statement

This thesis is entirely my own work except where otherwise indicated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zhu Yunxia', with a stylized, flowing script.

Zhu Yunxia

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank those who have been involved at various stages of writing my thesis. They include Dr. Andy Kirkpatrick, Dr. Beverly Hong-Fincher, Mr. Robert Parbs and Dr. Amanda Scott. Above all, I would like to thank my main supervisor Dr. Anthony Liddicoat who has given me constant advice and encouragement all through the past three years. His patience was appreciated and I wish him the best of luck in the future. I would also like to thank Dr. Anthony Diller who has given me expert advice and guidance constantly in the last two years of my PhD studies.

I should also thank Wang Jiakun, Zhang Qun, Zhang Daming, Wang Yuxin, Zeng Ling and many others who collected data for me from mainland China.

I should also thank Zhu Hongwen and Zhu Yungang who have provided information and material on the earlier business practice of mainland China.

Special thanks are given to my husband, Zhang Pingxin who gave me encouragement as well as intellectual stimulation.

Thanks also have to be given to those such as the Hennan Institute of Finance and Economics who offered me the opportunity to conduct the questionnaire, and those companies, such as Zhongyuan Foreign Trade Company, Beihang Company and many others, who offered me the opportunity to interview the managers.

Abstract

This study sets out to propose a combined approach to examine sales genres used in mainland China, including ‘tuixiaoxin’ (sales letters), ‘tuixiao yaoqingxin’ (sales invitations) and ‘tuixiao tongzhi’ (sales circulars). These three genres are chosen because they are the most frequently used. However, they have not been thoroughly studied and there is a pressing need for this research. To be specific, this study focuses on the following four areas.

First of all, this thesis studies the development of sales genres that have been used since 1949 in relation to the changes of social and economic context. This thesis also studies the position of these genres in Chinese written discourse in relation to the three larger genres of ‘xiaxing’ (the superior writing to the subordinate), ‘pingxing’ (equals writing to each other) and ‘shangxing’ (the subordinate writing to the superior). The use of the ‘xiaxing, pingxing and shangxing’ sales genres reflects reader and writer relationships in different social contexts.

Secondly, this study proposes a combined approach based on schema theory (the earliest statement being Bartlett, 1932) and Swales’ (1990) genre analysis. References are also drawn from Chinese sources relating to genre study. The important concepts coordinated are genre and communicative purposes from Swales, and world schemata from schema theory. The merits of this approach mainly lie in its regard for social context, knowledge structure and genre types. With this approach, genre studied in relation to factors such as economic structure, cultural norms and knowledge structure of the discourse community. Above all, with this approach, one can study the dynamic nature of genre.

This approach also relates to questionnaires and interviews with two groups of native speakers: enterprise managers and business writing students. The findings further support our claim about the importance of world schemata in understanding genre.

Thirdly, this thesis has addressed the dynamic nature of genres. With changes in social and economic structure, genres can emerge, disappear and change. Some of the sales genres used in the past are no longer used, while some, such as sales letters and sales invitations began to be used. Sales ‘tongzhi’ (circulars) indicate a genre shift, and

have embodied a number of changes in communicative purposes, moves and steps, and linguistic forms as a response to the changes of the economic structure.

Fourthly, this study considers three sales genres used since the economic opening-up of mainland China in 1978. In each of these genres, communicative purposes are treated as an important concept, and studied in relation to social context and world schemata. These purposes are also used as a starting point to study the lower levels of the text, such as move, steps and linguistic forms.

We end the study by discussing implications for business Chinese teaching and language teaching in general. Further research needed in relevant areas, such as cross-regional study of Chinese business communication and inter-cultural communication has also been highlighted.

Notation conventions

GNE: Genitive	QM: Question marker
H: Honorific form	Class: Classifier
PM: Passive Marker	ASP: Aspect marker
Pl: Plural	NP: Noun phrase

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Introduction

1 The problem

This thesis aims to propose an approach to examine the writing conventions and principles of sales genres in Chinese¹ business communication. The sales genres include ‘tuixiaoxin’ (sales letters), ‘tuixiao yaoqingxin’ (sales invitations) and ‘tuixiao tongzhi’ (sales circulars) currently used in mainland China, which are also the major types of sales genre used since the economic opening-up in 1978. There has been very little study of Chinese business written genres, although some research has been done in business communication (eg. Clyne, 1994; Hildebrandt, 1990, 1995; Holden and Ulijn, 1992; Ulijn and Strother, 1995). The exception is Kirkpatrick (1991, 1993) who explores the writings of Chinese request letters in the area of contrastive rhetoric (Kaplan, 1966, 1972, 1988). The only available Chinese literature is related to textbook advice about how to produce these genres. This indicates an urgent need to explore this area. In such a seldom explored area, special attention has to be paid to a comprehensive approach from both historical and sociolinguistic perspectives.

There are also practical needs for studying Chinese business writing. Since China began its economic opening-up in 1978, it has had more and more contact with other countries in business. How to communicate effectively is now an important issue in business communication management. Specific areas such as business writing need to be explored.

The impetus for this study also comes from several years working with Chinese students learning business writing in an international context. More and more students are enrolled in programs relating to business communication, which also suggests an urgent practical need for research in this area. In addition, I found that the textbook advice did not fully reflect the communicative purposes of the genre in practice, and that the process of teaching and learning effective business writing is largely a matter of professional knowledge structure building.

All the above has brought to light the need to explore Chinese business writing and the issue of studying genre by combining both psychological factors, such as knowledge

¹ For convenience, since this study is limited to examining sales genres used in mainland China, the terms ‘Chinese’ and ‘China’ are often used with these limitations assumed.

structure and genre study. It is a complex task for a genre analyst because it goes beyond the surface level of language studies, and deals with an issue relating to understanding genre in relation to social context and knowledge structure. Therefore, this research needs a broad approach encompassing both language studies, communication, social context and application of knowledge. With this approach, a genre analyst can give a full account of the genre in terms of both communicative purposes and conventions of genre. With these problems in mind, I started this study of sales genres, building on research in the area of genre analysis in both English and Chinese.

2 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyse the three sales genres currently used in mainland China and describe in what way they are written to achieve their communicative purposes. Research questions include:

- 1 How can one construct professional knowledge structures to understand genre?
- 2 What are the communicative purposes used in the different sales genres?
- 3 How are these purposes realised in different levels of the text?
- 4 Can different understandings of communicative purposes affect lower level choices in a text?
- 5 What is the style each sales genre prefers? Is this preferred style related to the communicative purposes?
- 6 What are the relationships between social context and communicative purposes of genre?
- 7 How can we explore the dynamic nature of genre from a diachronic perspective?

3 The approach

Since most of the above questions are related to the study of genre, the first approach that can be drawn on is Swales' (1990) genre analysis. The next possible approach is schema theory (the earliest statement being Bartlett, 1932), because this approach focuses on the knowledge structure and learning process. Both of these approaches have the

potential to be combined to explore the questions raised above. In addition, Chinese sources of rhetoric and composition writing also suggest some potential for this combined approach.

Therefore, a combined or synthetic approach mainly based on Swales' genre analysis and schema theory will be proposed in this thesis. This will involve an examination of:

(1) Communicative purposes of genre, which refer to what a genre intends to achieve.

(2) Discourse community, which is composed of groups of people who share similar professional knowledge structures and public common goals, such as managers in the business writing discourse community.

(3) World schema, a concept which refers to the professional knowledge structure required to understand communicative purposes.

(4) Top-down information processing, a concept, which contrasts with the bottom-up model, and refers to a particular kind of information processing model of a text in which the analyst or reader understands or decodes a text from the higher level down to the bottom level.

(5) The dynamics of genre, a concept which refers to the evolution of genre. A genre is viewed as always potentially in the process of developing in relation to social and economic context.

The above concepts and the proposed approach are discussed in Chapter 2. Together they can address the research questions listed above and provide a broad view which encompasses social context, communicative purposes and genre.

4 Organisation

The structure of this thesis follows these stages. In Chapter 1, a brief introduction is given to business communication in mainland China from a historical point of view. The purpose of this chapter is to provide some background information on the understanding of sales genres in general in relation to genre development. In Chapter 2, a brief review of relevant research on genre analysis by both Western and Chinese scholars is presented. Specifically, the Swales (1990) genre theory, schema theory (Bartlett, 1932; Adams and Collins, 1979; Rumelhart and Ortony, 1977), and Chinese rhetoric Liu Xie (Shih, 1959) and composition theory (eg. Zhang, 1981; Zhang, 1983a; Yang, 1983) will be summarised and

discussed to present an integrated approach for this thesis. In Chapter 3, an introduction to the research design is given. Specific issues relating to data collection, questionnaire and interview administration and related matters are explained. In Chapter 4, detailed analysis is given to sales letters in a discussion about how communicative purposes are realised in a top-down manner. In Chapter 5, sales invitations is analysed, while in Chapter 6, an analysis of sales 'tongzhi' (circulars) is presented. Chapter 7, the concluding chapter, summarises the major findings in the study. The strengths of this approach are further discussed. In addition, implications for teaching business Chinese and languages in general, and further research directions in Chinese business writing are also suggested.

Chapter 1. Social context and sales genres

1 Introduction

This chapter gives an introduction to Chinese business communication and the position of sales genres from a diachronic perspective (1949 to the present). Although this thesis is mainly concerned with sales genres used since 1978, it is necessary to introduce the development of sales genres and provide some background information on business practice in mainland China. In this way, sales genres can be examined in relation to social context and to the general rules of genre evolution. Here sales genres refer to different types of writing used to buy and sell products. Among them, 'tuixiaoxin' (sales letters) are only one type, there are others, such as sales 'qingshi' (requests raised by subordinates), sales 'pifu' (official replies), 'tuixiao yiaoqingxin' (sales invitations) and 'tuixiao tongzhi' (sales circulars). In the discussion, the translated names of these forms, such as 'sales letters', 'sales invitation' and 'sales tongzhi' are preferred for the convenience of easy reference. The exploration is composed of the following three tasks. First, this chapter will give an introduction to the different periods in Chinese business communication; second, an introduction will be given to the three larger genres of 'gongwen' (official letters) in Chinese written discourse in relation to sales genres; third, the relationship between the use of sales genres in each period and the nature of the economic structure will be discussed. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the position of sales genres in Chinese business communication and answer questions along the lines of: What different kinds of sales genre are used in each period? What factors determine the type of sales letters to be used in each period? Can the use of sales genres suggest any links to the social and economic context? Finally, how can the use of sales genres reflect the general principles of Chinese written discourse?

2 The periods in Chinese business communication

The period under discussion covers about five decades (from 1949 to the present). This period can be further divided into two periods: the pre-opening up period: 1949-78, and the opening-up period: 1978 to the present. Fundamental changes took place in 1978 when the open-door policy was first implemented. Therefore 1978 can be set as a

demarcation line. Since then, China has been developing towards a market economy. Together with this change in economic structure, there came a fundamental change in business communication. This division happens to agree with the socialist de-linking and re-linking development strategy (Tian, 1996). The 1949-78 period represents China's de-linking from the market economy; the period after 1978 represents the re-linking to the market economy. During these two periods, business communication has been conducted by means of very different sales genres. For example, since 1978, sales letters have begun to play an increasingly important role in business.

2.1 Period 1: 1949-1978

This period is characterised by de-linking from the market economy and an emphasis on a planned economy. The meaning of de-linking was to 'break with the world market' (Amin, 1974:35). This strategy mainly involved two characteristics. The first relates to market mechanisms under socialism. Commodity and market relations were only accepted to a very limited extent, and would be gradually replaced by a planned economy. The second characteristic relates to the public ownership of production. The Communist Party leaders strongly believed that public ownership was the prerequisite for a planned economy. Consequently by 1957, public ownership was established almost all over the country, "despite the fact that total socialisation had originally been planned to be implemented by 1968" (Tian, 1996:79). Under this system, the business of commodity exchange was practised and controlled by public ownership at different levels. All enterprises were state-owned and did not have the independence to make decisions in relation to buying and selling.

Products were distributed and sold through a top-down umbrella network. The headquarters was the Central Commercial Ministry, the second level was the provincial bureau, the third level was the district bureau, and the fourth level consisted of the grassroots of the country and town bureaus. The headquarters would plan and make decisions about selling products. The grassroots bureaus could only get what the higher levels distributed to them. Under this system, there was no need to promote products or write sales letters to facilitate selling, because everything was planned and decided on by different levels of superiors. Therefore, no sales letters were actually written during this

period. Only sales documents such as sales 'qingshi' (requests), sales 'pifu' (official replies) and sales 'tongzhi' (circulars) were employed. These types of writing were not related to the promotion of products, but rather to implementing the sales policies of the country. These sales genres will be further discussed in the next section of this chapter.

This de-linking had created tremendous economic problems by the end of the 1970s. Rigid central economic planning and monolithic public ownership depressed producers' enthusiasm and reduced economic efficiency. Thus the de-linking strategy was strongly challenged by Deng Xiaoping as soon as he came to power in 1978. Consequently, at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Party, the new Party leaders declared that China would actively expand economic cooperation in terms of equality and mutual benefit with other countries and strive to adopt the world's advanced technologies (Beijing Review, 29 December 1978:11). This endorsement of the open-door policy was later clearly defined as 'economic opening-up to the outside world' (Deng, 1985:19), thus starting Period 2 of re-linking to the market economy.

2.2 Period 2: from 1978 to the present

This period represents a re-linking to the market economy. During this period, sales letters started to be used in business communication. This period also has two characteristics. The first is the establishment of a socialist commodity economy. This economic system affirms the central role of market mechanisms and endeavours to combine market and planning to raise productivity. The second characteristic relates to the nature of ownership. The previous nature of public ownership was attacked and a diversification of ownership came into being. An initial attempt was made to introduce collective ownership through the rural reform of 1978. Although this reform aimed at a revival of household agriculture, it turned out to be a success in raising productivity; and as a result, gained support from the Chinese authorities. Due to the success of this reform, similar reforms took place all over the country. Following this, enterprises began to change in nature from state-owned to more and more privately owned. In fact, the major task of the enterprise reform centres on the decentralisation and privatisation of ownership. The state-owned enterprises are given more responsibility and independence in their own operation. For example, the contract system became quite prevalent throughout the country (De Mente, 1989:131). This

is the system under which the managers of state-owned enterprises sign contracts to specify how much tax each enterprise will deliver to the government. In this way, these enterprises are also operated more or less as private enterprises. As a result, four main streams of enterprises coexist side by side: foreign-owned, joint-ventures, fully private, and state-owned enterprises. Although there still remains some public ownership through state-owned organisations, every enterprise in the mainstream is involved in the competitive market economy. Technology and mass production techniques began to develop, and many companies, regardless of the nature of their ownerships, are turning out products roughly at the same price. The structure of selling has changed fundamentally and every enterprise has to promote its own products. According to Vestergaard and Schroder (1985), promotion is a typical feature of the market economy. In short, China is changing from a planned economy to a market economy. Under these changes, there appears to be a gradual revival of the practice of sales letters. Product promotion is becoming vital for every enterprise, and this has led to the popularity of sales letters.

Since both private and state-owned enterprises coexist in practice, there is more than one type of sales genre, and these reflect the complicated ownership relations. In fact, three types are commonly in practice: (1) sales letters, (2) sales invitations, and (3) sales ‘tongzhi’ (circulars). Sales letters are similar to Western sales letters in function and are used to promote products to potential customers. Sales invitations are another means of promotion, realised indirectly by inviting the reader to attend an exhibition where products are promoted. They are often used by either individual enterprises or state-owned organisations. Both sales letters and sales invitations only appeared in Period 2 and are gaining increasing importance in today’s business circles. Sales ‘tongzhi’ are sales letters written in a ‘tongzhi’ form. They are thus a type of ‘gongwen’ (official letter) used by superiors to subordinates. All the above three genres will be discussed further below.

3 Defining sales genres used in both periods

Textbook advice can be used as a reference in discussing the sales genres. However, textbooks tend to discuss forms of writing in a very general sense and do not generally look at sales genres as a particular type. For example, textbooks tend to look at all types of ‘tongzhi’ (circulars) as one type, and ‘qingshi’ (official replies) as another, rather than

treating sales ‘tongzhi’ or ‘qingshi’ as individual genres. One exception is that they do treat sales letters as an individual genre because it is a new genre. Each of the sales genres will be discussed as an individual genre. In this chapter, only the three genres used in the first period will be exemplified with authentic letters collected from the archives of the Zhongmu Commercial Bureau. Both the original and the translated versions of these letters will be provided. The other three genres of the second period will be discussed in detail in the relevant chapters in this thesis.

3.1 Sales genres used in the first period

3.1.1 Sales ‘qingshi’ (requests)

According to Li (1983: 200), ‘qingshi’ are official letters by means of which a subordinate makes a request to his/her superior for an approval. This definition can be used to help define sales ‘qingshi’. In a business context, a sales ‘qingshi’ is a formal sales request raised by a subordinate to a superior to replenish stock. In the first period, the subordinate level could only sell what the superior had supplied. If the subordinate organisation was in need of a certain product, they had to go through the request procedure to have the product supplied. The sales request was the first step in these procedures. Take the following excerpt as an example:

关于增加今年冬季取暖煤的请示报告

XX地区商业局领导,

由于我县最近新建一座大规模的造纸厂, 我县城镇人口增加了5000人。现急需增加第四季度取暖煤 1000 吨, 以满足人口增长之需要。

以上请示当否, 请批复。

XX县煤建公司

1965 年 X月X日

Heading	Request about Increasing Coal Supply for Winter Heating
Salutation	The leading comrades of XX District Commercial Bureau,
Request	Since our town has recently set up a paper plant on a large scale, the population of our town has increased by about 5,000. Now we urgently need an increase of 1,000 tons of coal for winter heating in the fourth season of this year.

Closing

Whether or not the above request is appropriate, please give an official reply.

Signature

Coal Company of XX Town

Date

XXX, 1965

The above example indicates how a subordinate raised a request to a superior. The request relates to a supply of coal, the main heating material in the past. The writer expresses the request indirectly by telling the writer about the urgent need. The salutation refers to the position of the reader as ‘leading comrades’. The closing indicates the uncertain attitude of the subordinate about whether the request is appropriate, which is a typical subordinate’s attitude in a ‘qingshi’ (Li, 1983: 200). Both the salutation and the closing indicate the appropriate degree of politeness towards a superior. The letter as a whole indicates that the subordinate does not have control of the planned stock supply, and has no choice but to wait for a reply from the superior. This letter is an example of sales ‘qingshi’ which were an important genre, since it was the initial step in obtaining supplies at that time.

3.1.2 Sales ‘pifu’ (official replies)

According to Li (1983:201), ‘pifu’ are official replies often used by a superior to a subordinate’s ‘qingshi’ (request). In a similar way, a sales ‘pifu’ is closely related to a ‘qingshi’ since it is a response to a sales ‘qingshi’ for a stock supply. In this way, sales ‘pifu’ are an important genre in the second and also the final step in obtaining stock supplies. This genre can be exemplified in the following letter, which is also the reply to the above sales request letter:

XXX 地 区 商 业 局 文 件

关于XX县增加今年冬季取暖煤的请示的批复

XX县煤建公司,

你公司关于增加今年冬季取暖煤的请示报告收悉。经研究特做以下批复。

由于今年全地区的冬季用煤普遍增加，我们须对全地区的冬季取暖煤供应做统筹安排。因此，现增批你公司冬季取暖煤800吨。

其空缺部分，望自行解决。

此复。

Document of XX Provincial Bureau	
Heading	Reply to XX Town Company's Request for an Increase of Coal Supply
Salutation	Coal company of XX Town,
Official reply	We have received your request about increasing the coal supply for winter heating. After discussion, we have made the following approval.
Approval	Owing to an increased demand for coal supplies all over the province, we have to make an overall plan about how to supply the stock for all the towns of the province. Therefore an increase of only 800 tons of coal is approved for you. Detailed information about the time and place of its arrival will be provided in the near future. (We) hope you can solve the rest of the problem by yourself.
Closing	This is in response to your request.
Signature	XX District Commercial Bureau
Date	XXX, 1965

The above letter indicates how a superior gives an official reply to a subordinate. It gives, to a certain degree, an approval of the sales request. The official tone to a subordinate is shown by the phrase 'after discussion'. Here the English translation is only an approximation, and the Chinese original signals that the view concerned is an agreement among a group of decision-makers. The closing is the usual way a superior ends an official reply. The letter as a whole shows that the superior organisation has control over the supply of coal. It also shows that the customers' needs may not be fully met, and that the supply of goods, especially important energy resources such as coal, was controlled by the country.

3.1.3 Sales 'tongzhi' (circulars)

According to Li (1983:184), 'tongzhi' are mainly used to give instructions to subordinates, and therefore have to be written in an official tone. Following this definition, we can define sales 'tongzhi' as a sales genre which is used to give instructions related to sales or selling policies. The following 'tongzhi' about setting the price for truck sales exemplifies the genre.

中国 XX 部 XX 处 文 件

关于调整解放牌汽车内部价格的通知

各有关单位，

最近我们对XX型系列载重汽车进行了大量改 进工作。由于受能源，原 材
料和协作件价格上涨因素的影响，使得汽车成本逐渐增加。尽管采取很多措施，也
难全部消化。为此，经研究决定将调整系解放系列载重汽车内部价格做适当调整。
望有关单位遵照执行并给于大力支持于配合。调整后价格从今年5月25日执行。

中国XX部XX处
1972 年 X月X日

Heading	Document of XXX Branch of XXX Ministry Tongzhi about the Planned Price of ‘Jiefang’ Trucks	
Salutation	Every company concerned,	
Decision	Recently we have upgraded our truck series. Owing to the price	
Order	increase of energy resources, raw materials, and parts, the production cost	
	has increased accordingly. Although a lot of measures have been adopted to	
	cope with the price increase, it is still hard to balance the cost. Therefore,	
	we have decided after discussion that the planned price of ‘Jiefang’	
	trucks will be modified appropriately. It is hoped that every company	
	concerned will comply with this decision and give active support and	
	coordination. The modified prices will be effective from May 25.	
Signature	XXX Branch of XXX Ministry	
Date	XXX, 1972	

The above ‘tongzhi’ indicates how a superior makes a decision to modify the price of trucks and gives an order to subordinates to comply with the decision. The language forms chosen also help express the official tone. For example, the phrase ‘to decide after discussion’ is used to suggest this tone. The order is expressed by the whole sentence, ‘it is hoped that every company concerned must comply with this decision and give active support and coordination’. This is a typical ‘tongzhi’ order which will be discussed further in Chapter 6. When given such an order, the subordinate reader has no choice but accept it.

3.2 Sales genres used in the second period

The first type of sales genre used in this period is ‘tuixiaoxin’ (sales letters). Sales letters refer to letters used to promote products. This sales genre is mainly employed by the

owner or manufacturer of the product. The main purpose of this type of letter is to advertise the product and persuade the reader to buy it. One can therefore see that the use of sales letters already in a way reflects the change towards market economy. For the first time in Chinese business communication, companies have begun to promote products on a large scale and compete in the market, although letters relating to small business sales may have been written before 1949.

The second type is 'tuixiao yiaoqingxin' (sales invitations). Sales invitations, in fact, are similar to sales letters in that they are also related to promotion of the product. The difference lies in that a sales invitation is sales promotion written in the form of an invitation. It is used to invite the reader to come to an exhibition of the product and to buy the product there.

The third type is 'tuixiao tongzhi' (sales circulars). Sales 'tongzhi' still refer to the form used in the first period, although in the second period, the purposes of sales 'tongzhi' seem no longer to be the same. In fact, sales 'tongzhi' bear the characteristics of both sales letters and 'tongzhi'. This means sales 'tongzhi' are written in the 'tongzhi' form and are used by a superior to give orders to a subordinate where public ownership is practised. However, the writer at the same time also tries to advertise and promote the product. This indicates that the writing of sales 'tongzhi' has now been influenced by the changes in the economic structure, although the type of sales 'tongzhi', similar to those used in the first period, can still be found.

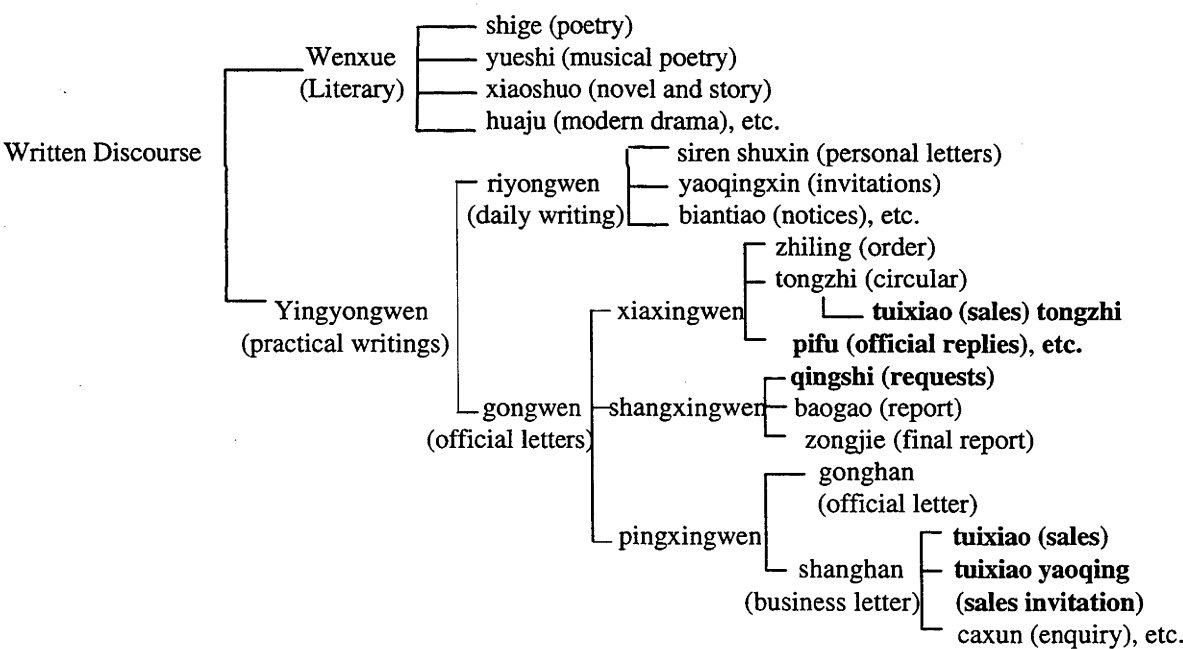
The above description of sales genres indicates that different kinds of sales genres are used in these two different periods of business communication. Within each period various sales genres have been chosen, mainly on the basis of the different writer-reader relationships and communicative needs. For example, sales 'qingshi' (requests) were directed to a superior to express a request for stock supplies, and sales 'pifu' (official replies) and 'tongzhi' (circulars) were used by the superior to either give a reply or an order. In contrast, a kind of equal relationship is presented in both sales letters and sales invitations which promote products. Sales 'tongzhi' are the only form that has been used in both periods. In the first period, it was used to express an order relating to selling policies. However, in the second period, although it is still related to an order, it is very much influenced by sales-letter writing. From the above discussion of the sales genres, we can see

that there is a relationship between the types of letters and the writer-reader relationship determined by the economic structure. All this can be further explored by referring to the positions of the sales genres in a larger context of Chinese written discourse, and by referring to the historical development of some of the relevant genres.

4 The position of sales genres in Chinese written discourse

Based on the criterion of functional use, Chinese written discourse can be seen as composed of a literary genre and ‘yingyongwen’ (practical writing). Numerous studies (eg. Zhang, 1983a; Ma, 1984; Song, 1984; Liang et al., 1992) have been undertaken on the position of the latter in Chinese written discourse. These studies generally agree that ‘yingyongwen’ (practical writings) include ‘riyongwen’ (daily writings) and ‘gongwen’ (official letters). In this complicated network, the position of the sales genres so far discussed can be summarised in Figure 1:

Figure 1: The position of sales genres in Chinese written discourse



The above figure is not an exhaustive list of all Chinese written genres. It outlines Chinese written genres in general and points out where sales genres fit in. As can be seen, there are three genres in ‘gongwen’ (official letters), a term which contrasts with ‘siren shuxin’ (personal letters). ‘Gongwen’ include letters written by an organisation or enterprise, and

comprise: ‘xiaxingwen’² (the superior writing to the subordinate), ‘shangxingwen’ (the subordinate writing to the superior) and ‘pingxingwen’ (equals writing to each other). These three subdivisions are used to indicate different kinds of relationships between the reader and the writer. As shown in the above figure, sales genres appear under all of these three larger genres. Sales ‘pifu’ and sales ‘tongzhi’ belong to the ‘xiaxing’ genre, sales ‘qingshi’ belong to the ‘shangxing’ genre, and sales letters and sales invitations belong to the ‘pingxing’ genre. Since sales ‘pifu’, sales ‘tongzhi’ and sales ‘qingshi’ were used in the first period of business communication, this period was characterised by the use of both ‘xiaxing’ and ‘shangxing’ genres. Since sales letters, sales invitations and ‘sales tongzhi’ are mainly used in the second period, and the first two are more frequently used, this period is characterised by the use of mainly ‘pingxing’ genre, and to a certain extent, the use of ‘xiaxing’ as well.

There appears to be some kind of link between the specific genres used and the nature of business communication in each period. In the first period, sales of products were carried out between superior and subordinate organisations, while in the second period, sales are mainly carried out between companies or organisations without any superior-subordinate relationships. The relationships between the reader and the writer in business communication brings the discussion of the three genres of ‘gongwen’ (official letters) to prominent consideration. The following discussion then will focus on exploring the three genres from a historical perspective.

4.1 The historical sources of the three genres

The three genres have existed as long as Chinese written history. Each genre aims to meet the needs of the development of society, and reflects different kinds of writer-reader relationship. ‘Xiaxing’ genre was used to perform a ‘top-down’ social rule and was related to the language of power and authority. The earliest writing of ‘xiaxingwen’ was found in an inscription on tortoise shells (1600-1100 BC), dealing with practical problems such as land and powers in the feudal society (Li, 1993:32). One of the simple orders from the Yin

² ‘Shangxingwen, pingxingwen and xiaxingwen’ will also be referred to as genres of ‘shangxing, pingxing and xiaxing’ in this thesis.

emperor (about 1,700 BC) is expressed this way (Kanshou, 1990:2) (only the English translation is given³):

The order comes from the Yin emperor that the serfs work hard, so
that a bumper harvest will be guaranteed.

In this primitive form of ‘ling’ (order), some characteristics of this typology have already appeared. In the first place, it belongs to ‘xiaxingwen’ as an order from the emperor to the serfs. The content was about the running of the land. According to Kanshou (1990), orders in ‘xiaxingwen’ were the earliest genre of ‘gongwen’ (official letters). This became an accepted written form of ‘gongwen’ to meet the needs of society and played an important social role. This means the ‘xiaxingwen’ in history had a clear communicative purpose. Over the course of time, ‘xiaxingwen’ became more and more enriched. The number of ancient ‘xiaxingwen’ reaches 175 types of texts (Liang et al., 1992:1-2). In the Han dynasty alone, there were as many as ten different names for various kinds of ‘ling’ or ‘orders’ from the emperor.

‘Shangxingwen’ were used to perform a ‘bottom-up’ social role and were used by subordinates to write to superiors. ‘Shangxingwen’ found their earliest form in ‘shu’ (letters) in the Qin Dynasty (Kanshou, 1990:4). ‘Shu’ derived from persuasive arguments given to the warriors. During the war-lord era, many warriors were involved in war, and everyone wanted to enlarge their lands. Accordingly large numbers of advisers used their power of persuasion in the running of war. Thus ‘shu’ played an important role during that time, as the word is mightier than the sword. ‘Shu’ in the written form still kept to its persuasive nature. It was employed by subordinates to express their opinions to their superiors, usually from warriors to the emperor. Since the addressee was the emperor, the writer had to be very careful with his/her logic and rhetoric. Therefore ‘shu’ had two characteristics: first, they had an important purpose regarding whom and what to persuade; second, they adopted appropriate schemes of persuasion. According to Chung (1982:274), these schemes were mainly of two kinds: double persuasion and circular persuasion. In double persuasion, the speaker or writer makes clear to the addressee the advantages and disadvantages of a

³All translations from Chinese, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.

military or political practice. Since it is based on comparison, a lot of parallel sentences and parenthesis are seen in these texts. In circular persuasion, the speaker or writer would try to lighten any imposition upon the reader and make him/her happy. All this paved the way for raising the appeal which usually came at the end of the speech or writing. Compared with 'xiaxingwen', this genre was indirect and persuasive. The reason was that the writer was conscious of the reader being a superior, and s/he had to be very careful about this social relationship, not only because the suggestions raised in the letter could be rejected, but also the writer might get killed if appropriate advice was not given. In fact, Kong Rong, a descendant of Confucius, was killed by the emperor Cao Cao for his direct and bold criticism of the emperor (Li, 1990:86-87). Judging from this, the writers of this genre always tried to find appropriate strategies to subtly make their point.

Later, more forms of 'shangxingwen' appeared with distinct social functions. 'Zhang' was to thank the emperor for his kindness, 'biao' was used by officials working under the emperor to express their opinions or feelings to the emperor, and 'zou' was used to raise critical opinions with the emperor (Liang et al., 1992:101). Altogether, there were about 67 types of 'shangxingwen' put in use in 'gongwen' in ancient times (Liang et al., 1992:8).

'Pingxingwen' date from about 1,500 years ago. According to Liang et al. (1992:151), one of the earliest forms so far known in history is 'yi' (dispatch used as type of diplomatic letter). This kind of 'gongwen' was used as a means of communication between countries regarding official matters. Later on it was also written among officials within a country. Moreover, with many states being involved in war to compete for land, the development of diplomatic ties between states became an important priority, and states also used 'yi' to communicate with each other. Another common form was 'xi' (war proclamation) which was used to declare war on other nations. Altogether there were 28 ancient types of 'pingxingwen' (Liang et al., 1992:6).

The above discussion of the historical development of the three genres shows the general features of genre development. Since there is a clear-cut reader-writer relationship for each genre, the writer would decide whether the genre should be 'xiaxing' or 'shangxing' on the basis of the relationship between the writer and reader. At the same time, s/he would also have the responsibility to express the purposes, following strategies appropriate for the

chosen genres. The above discussion also indicates that genres were constrained by their social function or communicative purposes and that each genre was created to accomplish a certain function. Once the function of the genre ceased to exist, the form became obsolete. For example, 'zhao' (edict) was very important during the emperor's reign, however, it was no longer used after the end of the imperial period. One can therefore see that 'gongwen' (official letters) are defined by their social roles. When the imperial system was replaced, many of the forms of a certain genre related to imperial rule came to an end.

In spite of the fact that many 'gongwen' (official letters) types became obsolete and disappeared, the three genres of 'shangxing, xiaxing and pingxing' still remain to indicate different reader-writer relationships. 'Gongwen' today is still classified into these three genres in Chinese approaches to rhetoric. This is also true of business communication as will be explored further below.

4.2 The three genres and the de-linking and re-linking policies

The general features of genre development also apply to the use of the sales genres. The three genres of 'xiaxing, pingxing and shangxing' are used differently in the two different periods of business communication. In fact, the employment of the three genres reflect the de-linking and re-linking policies. During the first period of business communication (1949-78), the major forms of sales variants were mainly related to 'xiaxing' and 'shangxing' genres, because these two genres could best realise the typical communicative purpose and reflect the predominant reader-writer relationships. Under public ownership and the planned economy, the Chinese authorities had control over the exchange of commodities, and therefore they could choose the forms from 'xiaxing' genre for giving orders to grassroots enterprises. In this way, the higher level of the organisation could exercise control over the limited practice of commodity exchange. As a result, the lower levels had to choose the 'shangxing' genre forms to express their needs for products. Both of the 'shangxing' and 'xiaxing' genres were used in this period to express the purpose of selling and buying, and at that time to indicate the superior and subordinate relationships between the writer and the reader.

In contrast, the second period is characterised by the policy of relinking to the market economy and the need arose to develop competitiveness in each enterprise. In this

situation, sales 'qingzhi' (requests) and sales 'pifu' (official replies) ceased to exist after 1978, although 'qingshi' and 'pifu' still exist in areas other than sales. The reason is that public ownership was greatly challenged and has given way more and more to privatisation. The relationship between the writer and reader in sales transactions is no longer limited to superiors and subordinates. This period has seen the wide use of 'pingxing' genre to promote products, although 'xiaxing' genre is still used to a certain degree. In 'pingxing' genre, there is one form — 'shanhan' (a kind of official business letter), which is used among enterprises who are equals in rank or who do not have any superior-subordinate relationships. The 'shanghan' relating to sales are mainly realised in the form of 'sales letters' and 'sales invitations'. These are the appropriate genres to realise the communicative purposes involved in commodity exchange and reflect the reader and writer relationships in the opening-up situation. This means that enterprises have to rely on themselves to promote their products. Sales letters and sales invitations are found to best serve this kind of social need, and so they are gaining increasing popularity.

However, the 'xiaxing' sales 'tongzhi' also continued to be used in the second period — the only type in use in both periods. The use of 'sales tongzhi' reflects a combined feature of public and private ownership. In the public sector, superiors from a higher level still have some influence over the enterprises to a certain degree. Sales 'tongzhi' are found to be the appropriate form to express the voice of the superiors. However, sales 'tongzhi' play a different function in the two periods. In the first period, they were mainly used to implement selling policies, while in the second period, they are often used by higher levels of government organisations to promote sales. Sales 'tongzhi' reflect the complicated change in the economic system and the extent of superiors' influence. Although they are not as frequently used as the above two types of sales letters because of the decentralising tendency in all enterprises, sales 'tongzhi' are still used when necessary in this transitional period towards a market economy. One may assume that once all enterprises have complete control over their decision-making, there will be no further need to use this genre in sales transactions.

5 Conclusion

The use of sales genres is closely related to the social and economic structure of the country. Changes of economic structure have been reflected in changes in the sales genres used in business communication, thus sales genres have very different communicative purposes determined by the social context. This has been shown by the different kinds of sales genres used in the two periods of Chinese business communication. In the first period, 'xiaxing' and 'shangxing' genres were frequently used to implement selling and wholesale policies under the planned economy. In the second period, some of the sales genres used in the first period disappeared, but new genres appeared, and 'pingxing' sales genres became popular. The 'xiaxing' sales 'tongzhi' appear to be the link connecting the two periods and to reflect a genre change in business communication. All these sales genres have an important position in Chinese written discourse. The three genres of 'xiaxing, pingxing and shangxing' in business communication can very well reflect the reader-writer relationship. The close reader-writer relationship can be traced back to the origins of the three genres. Not only will the writer choose the appropriate genre, but s/he will also have to communicate effectively with the reader. In addition, the diachronic development of sales genres, as well as other genres in Chinese written discourse, reflect the dynamic nature of genre. Since the social context is changing, new genres emerge and old genres disappear. Some genres, such as sales 'tongzhi', evolve in response to changes in the social structure.

Since the aim of this thesis, taking sales genres as an example, is to examine the use of genre as well as genre development in relation to social context, we need a broad approach to embrace and reflect all these general features, such as communicative purposes, economic philosophy, and the dynamics of genre. This required approach will be proposed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2. Conceptual Framework

1 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the literature from both Chinese and English sources on which I have drawn to develop the conceptual framework for this study. First, a combined approach will be proposed based on Swales' (1990) genre analysis and schema theory (the earliest reference being Bartlett, 1932) to discuss the concept of genre. Second, other relevant approaches will be discussed. Among them is the analysis of English business letters in the work of Ghadessey (1993) and Bhatia (1993), with a focus on levels of analysis. Another source is the study of Chinese written discourse and sales letters. In this case, both descriptive and prescriptive approaches will be discussed. For the descriptive approach, Liu Xie (Shih, 1959) and Chen (1947) will be discussed, while for the prescriptive approach, business textbooks will be discussed.

2 Schema theory

Schema theory originated with the British psychologist Bartlett (1932) within the Gestalt tradition. 'Schema' refers to background knowledge and is principally used in language comprehension and recall. According to schema theory (Bartlett, 1932; Rumelhart and Ortony; 1977; Rumelhart, 1980), a text does not have meaning by itself when it is presented to readers or learners. They have to construct the meaning based on their own previously acquired knowledge when reading or learning a text. These previously acquired knowledge structures are called schemata (Bartlett, 1932; Adams and Collins, 1979; Rumelhart, 1980). The process of understanding a text is thus seen by schema theorists as an interactive process between the readers' background knowledge and the text. A skilled reader can efficiently refer the text materials to his/her own knowledge and comprehend the whole text; while an unskilled reader can only refer parts of the text materials to his/her knowledge structures and thus has an incomplete comprehension. Therefore the understanding of a text does not only require linguistic knowledge, but also world knowledge. Since this theory is related to knowledge construction, it is often applied in text

comprehension and second-language reading (such as Clark, 1979; de Beaugrande, 1987; Eskey, 1973; Kintsch and van Dijk, 1978; Saville-Troike, 1973; and Widdowson, 1978, 1983).

According to schema theory, the efficient interpretation of a text is guided by the principle of combining top-down processes and bottom-up processes (Goodman, 1971; Johnson 1981; Rumelhart, 1977, 1980; Rumelhart and Ortony, 1977; Samuels and Kamil, 1988; Stanovich, 1980; Steffense et al., 1979). Top-down processing is based on making predictions about the text based on background knowledge, and verifying predictions by checking the lower levels of the text down to the linguistic forms. Bottom-up processing is decoding linguistic units such as phonemes, words, and constructing meaning from the smallest units to the largest. This process may lead to adjusting background knowledge and the predictions based on this in the light of the information gained from the text. Both the processes have their own advantages. Since the top-down process is related to making predictions, it has the advantage that the reader or learner can create a whole meaning from otherwise disconnected parts. However, this process requires the reader to have an appropriate level of knowledge to make correct predictions. Since bottom-up processing is related to adjusting background knowledge, it offers another direction in which the text can interact with and enrich the background knowledge. A skilled reader will often shift between these two modes and have a two-way interaction between text and background knowledge, while an unskilled reader tends to over-rely on one mode, either making unverified predictions or having disparate details about the text (Spiro, 1978, 1979).

The major concern of this thesis is top-down processing, as it can be used to complement Swales' (1990) approach. However, bottom-up processing will also be coordinated into the analysis where necessary. This means that genre analysis, like reading comprehension, can also be seen as a process of two-way or even interactive processing, although top-down features are seen as the most important means to present and understand the main ideas of the text.

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983, 1988) divide schemata into formal schema and content schema. The former refers to the background knowledge of the formal, rhetorical organisational structures of different types of texts, such as the differences in the structure of

fables, scientific texts and business letters, etc.; and the latter refers to background knowledge of the content area of a text, such as a text about the promotion of wool cloth, holding sales exhibitions and so on. Carrell and Eisterhold further point out that appropriate schemata must exist and must be activated during text processing to enable efficient comprehension; and if a reader does not have the appropriate schemata anticipated by the writer, s/he will fail to comprehend the text.

Cook (1994) uses schema theory to analyse literary texts, which indicates that schema theory is not relevant only for the study of first or second language comprehension but may very well be used in text analysis as well. Cook divides schemata into three kinds: world schema, text schema, and language schema. According to Cook (1994:15), world schema refers to 'schematic organisation of knowledge of the world, or of certain text types', such as schema for describing one's home. Text schema refers to the background knowledge of 'a typical ordering of facts in a real or fictional world' (Cook, 1994:15). Cook claims that his text schema is different from Carrell and Eisterhold's (1983, 1988) formal schemata because the latter is related to the ordering of functional units while Cook's text schema is related to 'a typical ordering of facts'. However, Cook does not provide any evidence for his claim, and it is very hard to see where the difference lies. Therefore, in this study, both formal schema and text schema will be taken as referring to background knowledge about the structure of a text. According to Cook (1994), there is also a language schema which refers to background knowledge related to the use of grammar and linguistic forms. Analysing a text is seen as an interactive process among these three levels of knowledge with the text.

To sum up, Carrell and Eisterhold (1983, 1988) and Cook (1994) inherited the tradition of schema theory and follow very similar principles in discussing how background knowledge interacts with the meaning of the text. Although they differ in detail as to what is to be included in background knowledge, their divisions of schemata can basically be seen as (1) non-linguistic schemata including world schema and content schema, and (2) linguistic schemata including formal schema, text schema and language schema. In a similar way, this study will adapt their models to refer to background knowledge as schemata of these two

different kinds, namely the world schema and the formal schema, which will be discussed below.

World schema in this study refers to genre-specific knowledge of the world which is related to a specific social context. Cook (1994:24) seems to mix the boundary between world schema and context when he discusses context as ‘a form of knowledge of the world’, such as paralinguistic factors. However, this study will separate context from world schema, and context will be treated as a component of the text. The reasons for this are twofold. First, a context is seen as located inside the text, and refers to a series of events (van Dijk, 1977) which are part of the world. It would be more appropriate to differentiate the world schema from context on the basis of location inside or outside the text. Second, context is also seen as the result of applying knowledge to understand the text, while world knowledge should be something previously acquired in the reader’s mind.

The second difference from Cook’s definition is that this paper defines world schema as genre-related. People may have different kinds of world schemata in general, such as a schema for fishing, for posting a letter, and so on. These general world schemata are not the concern here; rather, this study is mainly concerned with the genre specific world schema. In other words, it is concerned with the world knowledge relevant to business writing, especially to sales genres. In a sense, the genre-related world schema refers to knowledge which is similar to Paltridge’s (1995) institutional understandings, or professional knowledge, which can be defined along the lines of:

- (1) Knowledge of the cultural protocols of a particular discourse community, such as the appropriate degree of politeness or respect and so on.
- (2) The ideologies regarding what is desirable in order to accomplish a certain task of the discourse community, such as what can be persuasive factors and what can be attractive factors for the reader in the market situation.
- (3) The basic professional knowledge of the discourse community. In the case of the business discourse community, professional knowledge is related to marketing. A detailed discussion of this will be given in Chapter 3.

(4) The understanding of the role relationships between the writer and the reader, such as status and power. This is especially important in writing sales genres. As discussed in Chapter 1, different institutional distances or power is exhibited in 'xiaxing, pingxing and shangxing' sales genres.

The third way in which my definition of world schema differs from Cook's is that I attribute the feature of general knowledge to world schema, while Cook, as well as many others such as Adams and Collins (1979), Bartlett (1932) and Rumelhart (1980) confine world schema to an individual's knowledge. World schema in this thesis refers to the knowledge structure shared by a discourse community. This is not to say that there is no individual difference regarding knowledge structure; rather, I am looking at the general level of knowledge structure as being shared by the discourse community. In other words, a discourse community is composed of individuals, and although the knowledge structures of each individual may differ, they share some common features of world schemata that represent the general knowledge structures of this group. In fact, this knowledge is quite similar to the preference knowledge shared by a community discussed by de Beaugrande (1980) and de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). For example, in the managers' discourse community, the managers share something in common in their knowledge structures to reflect their views about the world in general. If an individual does not exhibit these general knowledge structures, s/he may not be admitted into the discourse community. In addition, knowledge structures should be viewed as dynamic, as the discourse community assimilates new trends into their knowledge structures. These new trends then become part of their world schema.

Another kind of schema is formal schema, which refers to genre-specific knowledge about text structure and the use of language. Although I have borrowed the name from Carrell and Eisterhold (1983, 1988), formal schema is used in this study in a slightly different way. First, the formal schema includes both textual structure and linguistic forms, while Carrell and Eisterhold mainly focus on textual structure in their definition. Secondly, the formal schema is genre-specific. One person may have general formal schemata regarding text structure and linguistic forms, and have specific formal schema to refer to the writing or understanding of a particular genre. It is the latter schemata that concern this study. From this perspective, the formal schema refers to the pragmatic use of the language of the genres

discussed in this study, such as what the expectations are about the rhetorical structure of a sales letter and what the expectations are about the specific linguistic forms used to introduce a product.

3 Coordinating Swales' approach with schema theory approach

Swales' (1990) approach will be discussed in relation to schema theory to indicate how they can be coordinated. The important concepts from Swales' genre theory to be discussed in this study are the concepts of the discourse community and genre, which are the mainstream of Swales' genre theory. As a matter of fact, when Swales is talking about a genre as belonging to a certain discourse community, he is already touching upon cognitive issues in relation to knowledge structures.

Swales' genre study has its own strength in emphasising the communicative purposes of genres, thus offering something schema theory lacks. However, Swales' approach lacks the cognitive analysis of the dynamics of genre (Bhatia, 1993). This weak point can be overcome by coordinating schema theory with Swales' approach. This will be explored in detail below in the discussion of Swales' views on discourse community, genre and rhetorical structures.

3.1 Discourse community

'Discourse community' derives from the concept of the speech community used in sociolinguistics (Bloomfield, 1933; Braithwaite, 1984; Hymes, 1974; Hudson, 1980; Labov, 1966; Saville-Troike, 1984) which is defined as composed of a group of people sharing 'similar linguistic rules' (Bloomfield, 1933), or 'shared norms' (Labov, 1966). For example, we can legitimately refer to people who speak Chinese as the Chinese-speaking community. However, according to Swales, the concept of speech community may not be adequate to explain and analyse written genres, for it is too general and is too abstract in its extension. He suggests that a discourse community is a group in which particular communicative tasks are central to the functioning of the group. Moreover, a discourse community is related to achieving goals. Therefore it is necessary to differentiate the speech community from a discourse community (Swales, 1990:24). To be specific, Swales (1990:24-27) assigns six characteristics to a discourse community which can be summarised as:

- (1). A discourse community has a broadly agreed set of common public goals, either formally described or implicitly understood. All the members share these goals and this sharing gives unity to the discourse community.
- (2). A discourse community has mechanisms with which its members communicate with each other. The means may vary, but the purpose of these mechanisms remains the same: to enable the members to communicate and express the communicative needs of the discourse community.
- (3). A discourse community uses its mechanisms of communication primarily to provide information and feedback, and membership implies that the members participate in the information flow of their community. In addition, the discourse community may also have secondary goals to improve its performance.
- (4). The discourse community uses and possesses one or more genres to further realise its aims. A discourse community shares discursual expectations which are related to the appropriate use of topics, form, and function of texts.
- (5). In addition to genres, the discourse community has acquired some specific lexis. This specialisation may refer to the use of specialised technical terminologies such as in medical communities. The lexis can make the communication more effective among its members who share an understanding of the terminologies, but may sound confusing to outsiders.
- (6). A discourse community has a threshold level for members, which ensures that they have a suitable degree of relevant content and discursual expertise.

However, Swales' features of the discourse community given above need to be expanded by another feature when schema theory is taken into consideration. A discourse community requires its members to exhibit a basic or general level of knowledge structures which are the prerequisite for anyone to become a member. These basic knowledge structures relate to the basic understanding of the world, which members need in order to understand the goals of the community, communicate with each other, and understand the genres used by the community as well. Without this basic knowledge, one could not do any of the above, and could not be accepted by the discourse community. For example, the Chinese managers' discourse community requires a certain level of basic knowledge, and this knowledge is shared by all of its members. As Swales (1990:24) explains, a discourse

community enrolls its membership by training or relevant education, which implies the existence of such knowledge structures in the discourse community, but he does not explore this any further.

The discourse community can thus be defined by a set of features with the focus placed on the realisation of purposes. These goals are understood by its members, who share the general knowledge structures for communicating with each other and continuously exploit linguistic resources in using genres.

For example, in this thesis, managers in Chinese business enterprises can be seen as members of the business writing discourse community because they can meet all the above criteria: they share the basic knowledge structures, they communicate with each other, and above all, they share the common public goals of promoting business and doing business with each other. On the other hand, students who are learning business writing would not be considered to be members of this discourse community because they do not really share the basic knowledge structures required by this discourse community. Therefore, they will be seen as a separate group who are being trained to enter this discourse community.

As elaborated above, a discourse community is closely related to the use of genre – another important concept to be explored below.

3.2 Genre

According to Swales, genre is defined as follows:

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style.

(Swales, 1990:58)

For the purpose of this study, communicative events will include those events in which language plays a central role. In this definition, at least three factors are involved. They are communicative purposes, the expert members and the linguistic choices. All of these need further elaboration.

First, genres are characterised as a set of communicative purposes. There have been a number of studies (Hymes, 1974; Miller, 1984; Saville-Troike, 1984; Martin and Rothery,

1986; Shopen, 1993) that focus on this issue. Among them Miller (1984: 32) pays special attention to the importance of communicative purposes, and points out that genre study should not only focus on the different forms genres employ but also on understanding their goals. Swales (1990) further points out that communicative purposes can offer protection against an inadequate classification based on stylistic similarities or inherited beliefs (Swales, 1990:46). The purpose-based approach can be more reliable than the form-based approach. This is especially true with genres that share similar forms. For example, a personal letter can be easily distinguished from a sales letter based on their different communicative purposes, although both genres may have similar forms of salutations and well-wishes. The personal letter is related to personal matters and social relationships, while a sales letter aims to sell a product. This difference in the two genres sets them apart in spite of the similar forms both letters might employ.

What then are communicative purposes and how can one identify them? There does not seem to be any ready answer to these questions. Swales explains that communicative purposes are the goals a genre aims to achieve and are less overt than form, and there is a need for the analyst to undertake independent and open-minded investigation to find them (Swales, 1990:46). As an important clue, Martin (1985:251) discusses genre as being used to accomplish social purposes. Here 'social purposes' offer some understanding of communicative purposes. Genre can be seen as related to purposes arising from the needs of the social context. Another possible clue can be found in Austin (1962), who discusses illocutionary and perlocutionary force. Illocutionary force refers to what a person wishes to accomplish by an utterance, such as making a request. The perlocutionary force refers to the effect the utterance has or the speaker hopes to have upon the hearer, such as convincing someone to do something. Similarly in a written genre, the communicative purposes can be seen as a combination of these two aspects: the intention to accomplish something and to influence the reader's mind as well. However, a genre, unlike individual utterances as often discussed in speech act theory, should be treated as a whole text to determine these purposes. For example, sales invitations may invite the reader to come to an exhibition, but the writer will also try to introduce the variety of products at the show with an effort to persuade the reader that s/he should come.

With regard to identifying communicative purposes, Bhatia (1993:21) points out that they are “reflected in the interpretative cognitive structuring of the genre, and represent the typical regularities of organisation”. Bhatia’s analysis implies that the communicative purposes of a genre are not readily expressed in a text, but have to be worked out by the reader or learner based on conventional social knowledge, reflecting directly the world schemata discussed Section 2 of this chapter. Since identifying communicative purposes is related to the cognitive process of making predictions, the way to identify them can be explained in a clearer way if schema theory is applied here. In fact, their identification mainly involves top-down processing in which the reader or learner has to make predictions at the higher levels of the text. Here, based on Swales (1990:58), a text is seen as an exemplar of genre both in purpose and form. However, since working out communicative purposes is not a simple matter of decoding the text, the reader or analyst has to refer to his/her own schemata concerning institutional knowledge and genre-specific formal knowledge to complete his/her predictions, and then use these predictions as the central idea to check that lower levels, including specific linguistic forms, verify the predictions. During this process, only people with appropriate schemata can make correct predictions and verifications. A lack of appropriate knowledge structures will lead to incomplete or even wrong understanding. It needs to be pointed out that the illocutionary force can be more explicit than the perlocutionary force, as the former is about specific tasks while the latter is about an effect or intended effect. Therefore, perlocutionary force will be more difficult to identify, and to identify this successfully requires one to have the appropriate knowledge structures.

It is even more difficult to determine communicative purposes since complex genres may have a set of communicative purposes. Take Chinese sales letters for example. Although the ultimate goal is to bring about the sale of products and services (cf. Aurner, 1958:279), a Chinese sales letter may involve other communicative purposes, such as achieving a positive public image, attracting the reader’s attention, and encouraging further communication. When communicative purposes have been determined, there is another problem, ie. to determine the relationships between them. In a genre that has a set of communicative purposes, one purpose may be complementary to another, or may be in conflict with another. The effectiveness of a text is determined by balancing the relationships between the communicative purposes (Miller, 1984; Horowitz, 1986). In Chinese sales

letters, there may be complementary relationships and conflicts among the communicative purposes. For example, the purpose of achieving a positive public image may be in conflict with the purpose of persuasiveness. Conflicts such as these need special attention and treatment in genre analysis, and will be part of the central concern of this thesis.

The second factor relating to Swales' (1990:58) definition is that genre is a highly structured and conventionalised communicative event. The expert members of the discourse community have the ability to recognise communicative purposes because they have a complete understanding of the conventions and rational structures of the genre. As Bhatia (1993:14) further argues, their knowledge regarding these conventions is based on "their long experience within the specialist community that shapes the genre and gives it a conventionalised internal structure". Bhatia's explanation involves in effect the issue of how to construct well-defined schemata. Expert members construct their knowledge structures by long and appropriate experiences of using the genre and by keeping in touch with the social context. As noted in Chapter 1, the development of genre is closely related to social and economic structure. However, this does not mean that people without any experience such as students learning business writing will never have the opportunity to develop their own knowledge structures to understand the genre. They can construct their world or formal schemata through available literature such as textbooks, analysis and even written samples of the genre. In this way, genre study or production should not be taken as a one-way process in which the schemata interact with the text. The text can also interact with the schemata. For example, well-written texts produced by experts in the discourse community can be used as a source of data to interact with the learner's knowledge structures. The learner can adjust previously acquired schemata by learning new forms from the text and relating them to a higher level of the text, and take the forms as choices of appropriate means to express the communicative purposes of the genre. Here it is very important that the literature on the genre reflects actual writing practices. If the literature does not fully reflect writing practices of the genre concerned, the learner may have only a partly defined world schema and thus possibly learn only part of the constraints and conventions of the genre.

Although in his definition of genre, Swales does not show how experts explicate the rational structures of a certain genre, there is some literature (Selinker, 1979; Bhatia, 1982) in relation to this. Selinker (1979) consults a specialist genetics professor for help in

interpreting a journal article in genetics. Bhatia (1982) uses a senior Parliamentary Counsel who has drafted the British Housing Act to investigate legislative language. While some studies have also been carried out by consulting specialist informants to check research findings, little research has been carried out to compare different sources of attitudes in order to validate professionals' attitudes. This study will take a further step and consult specialist members extensively to find out how professional members of Chinese business discourse community explicate the use of linguistic forms in sales genres using both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Since the expert members of this discourse community are very often enterprise managers who create and frequently use these written genres, they understand the communicative purposes and therefore are familiar with the conventions and structures of these genres. Their attitudes are therefore taken as representative of commonly held world and formal schemata for writing sales genres.

The third factor which needs to be considered is that the rationale behind a genre provides allowable constraints for the content and structure of the text. The communicative purposes and the conventions of the discourse community will determine the content, choices of linguistic forms and structures to be used for a certain genre, thus setting a framework in which texts can be produced. However, within this framework, the writer has allowable choices to decide what content is to be included in the text, and what appropriate forms are to be used to express this content. These choices are not fixed, but rather follow a continuum of possibilities. The writer should not violate the constitutive rules or mismatch the use of generic resources. For example, a sales letter written in the form of a newspaper report could be criticised as not acceptable or not in the right form, not only by expert members but also by good readers in general, because this violation is so apparent and is related to the general form of the genre. If a mismatch is not so apparent, such as in the linguistic choices involved in soliciting a response in a sales letter, professional members of the discourse community are more able than general good readers to recognise such a mismatch.

In addition, another feature can be added to the definition of genre, which is that genre is a dynamic process. On the one hand, as noted earlier, genre is closely related to social context. Since the social context may change, this can lead to changes and development of a genre. This view can explain why different sales genres were used in the

two periods of Chinese business communication as discussed in Chapter 1. On the other hand, expert members will reconstruct their schemata continuously as their world and formal schemata assimilate new knowledge regarding the evolution of genres in their professional world, thus they will often expand the constraints and the use of appropriate linguistic forms for the use of genres. Similar ideas about the dynamic nature of a genre have been expressed in Bhatia (1993, 1997) and Liddicoat (1996). As already noted, expert members have well-defined schemata for understanding and using a genre. They will at the same time, adjust their world schemata to the outside world, and reconstruct these schemata. This, in turn, will lead to genre reconstruction regarding the use of formal schemata. In this way, knowledge structures play a very important role in both genre analysis and genre development.

To sum up, “each genre is an instance of a successful achievement of a specific communicative purpose using conventionalised knowledge of linguistic and discoursal resources” (Bhatia, 1993:16). A genre is also the property of a discourse community: only expert members of this community are credited with the expertise of understanding and using it, because they have well-defined schemata. In addition, genre should also be seen as a dynamic process in which expert members of the discourse community often exploit and reconstruct the constraints and conventions.

From the above discussion on genre, it can be seen that Swales’ (1990) approach provides an example of using knowledge structures to study genre. Swales’ conception of communicative purpose has an advantage in that communicative purposes can be applied to a wide range of discourse, such as academic and professional writings, scientific texts, etc. Another advantage is that the study of communicative purposes can provide an overall view of the text to be studied. However, Swales does not show how communicative purposes can be identified, while schema theory can give a better explanation about the cognitive process involved in identifying them through the application of knowledge structures. However, schema theory has overlooked the communicative purposes of genres, and pays sole attention to the processes of cognition in relation to the construction of individual knowledge structures. If the two approaches are coordinated, a broader approach for genre analysis can be established.

3.3 Units of analysis

The units of analysis used by Swales (1981, 1986, 1990) are mainly moves and steps. However, there does not seem to be any ready definition given for them. Duszak (1994:299) explains Swales' moves as 'all a move is about is that a particular task is conventionally addressed'. In this respect, moves are related to the tasks the writer aims to accomplish, rather than linguistic boundaries. As an example, the following summary is quoted from Swales (1981), in which he assigns a typical four-move structure to the introduction of research articles in English on the basis of forty-eight article introductions:

Move 1: Establishing the research field

- (a) showing centrality of the topic or
- (b) stating current knowledge or
- (c) ascribing key characteristics

Move 2: Summarising previous research

Move 3: Preparing for present research

Move 4: Introducing the present research

- (a) giving the purpose
- (b) describing present research

As shown above, Swales's unit analysis is very much a top-down model in its own right. The higher level is a move, while the lower level, which is numbered alphabetically, is called a step. These specific moves and steps are used in the introduction section of research articles. The four moves indicate four different attributes with various intentions contributing to the realisation of the communication purposes of the genre. This analysis corresponds to Swales' (1990) communicative purposes in that every move also has an intention. It is very much purpose-oriented, and tries to trace and reflect the idea development of a text. The strength of the use of moves lies in the content orientation. In this respect, moves are independent of sentence or paragraph boundaries. Compared with the linguistic analysis of forms, this approach allows more flexible units. A move is not confined to the boundaries of phrases or sentences, and can reside in one or more phrases or sentences. In this kind of analysis, one looks for text boundaries in which the ideas of the text are expressed. That may

be the reason that a number of studies have followed this model to analyse academic or professional writings (see for example, Bhatia, 1993; Crookes, 1986; dos Santos, 1996; Duszak, 1994; Kathpalia, 1992; Skulstad 1996; Taylor and Chen, 1991; Teh, 1986).

Some criticisms have already been raised regarding the use of moves. For example, Crookes (1986) has queried the validity of move analysis. He complains that moves are mainly based on Swales' own personal judgement and lack empirical validation. Crookes also points out that raters often do not agree on the four moves assigned by Swales (1981). In spite of that, Crookes still thinks move analysis is theoretically correct and applies it in his own research, which is also content-based, and varies from Swales only in the amount of detail for the analysis. Because of this vagueness in the definition of moves, an analyst will face questions, such as what constitutes a move or a step, how moves and steps can be identified, and what the relationship between moves and steps is. Concerning these questions, 'move' still needs further elaboration and will be discussed below.

'Move' was first introduced by Bellack et al. (1966) in classroom discourse analysis, when they proposed a hierarchical structure for lessons with four units: game, sub-game, cycle, and move. Here the teaching situation is seen as a 'game' after Wittgenstein (1953). The lower unit of the move is further subdivided into four types: soliciting, responding, structuring, and reacting, each of which has a discourse function. According to Bellack et al. (1966), a soliciting move is intended to elicit a response from the person addressed. All questions raised by the teacher are taken as solicitations, such as commands and requests. A responding move is in a reciprocal relationship to a soliciting move. The students' answers to teachers' questions are seen as responding moves. A structuring move functions to set the context for subsequent behaviour by influencing the interaction between teachers and students. For example, a teacher can begin the class with a structuring move by focusing attention on the topic to be discussed during that session. A reacting move serves as the occasion for reactions and is used to modify or rate what has been said previously.

The above moves can be combined to form cycles. A cycle begins with a structuring or soliciting move and consists of one or more responding and reacting moves. In this way, a class is seen as composed of a series of cycles in which moves are the important elements which determine the boundaries of a cycle and indicate where a cycle begins and where it ends. These moves are also related to classroom activities in relation to communicative

events, or specific tasks in which teachers or students participate. The criteria for identifying moves in a classroom are based on what the teachers or students have done.

In a similar way, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) use the framework developed by Bellack et al. (1966) as a starting point for analysing classroom discourse, which they divide, in a hierarchical manner, into transactions, exchanges, moves, and acts. According to Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), acts describe moves in terms of elicitation, directives, and information. There are five types of moves: framing moves, focusing moves, opening moves, answering moves, and follow-up moves. A framing move serves to indicate the beginning of a class, and a focusing move to indicate the topic of teaching. An opening move is the starting of teaching, and is similar to Bellack et al.'s (1966) soliciting move. An answering move is related to the students' responses, and is similar to Bellack et al.'s responding move, while the follow-up move is related to the feedback the teachers give to the students. These five moves can realise two kinds of exchanges — boundary and teaching exchanges. A boundary exchange is indicated by the use of framing moves and focusing moves, and sets the boundary of a transaction. A teaching exchange is composed of opening, answering and follow-up moves, and is used to construct a unit lower than a transaction. These exchanges in turn serve to set a boundary for transactions. A transaction is composed^{of} a series of exchanges, such as boundary and teaching exchanges.

In Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) system of analysis, it can be seen that moves are, again, related to communicative events, or the specific tasks of teaching, and indicate the boundaries of classroom discourse, such as where a lesson starts, develops and ends. In addition, moves, although a rather low unit of a lesson, play a very important role in setting boundaries for higher units. The higher units, transactions and exchanges are determined by the use of moves. In fact, moves are the most important, because the boundaries of higher units are set by the specific moves, and the lower unit of acts are used to describe what specific forms a move employs. Moves are used as a structuring element in classroom discourse to indicate how the teaching is conducted. Since moves in classroom discourse are related to communicative events, it is also possible for the above principles to be applied to the study of written texts.

Text units or structures are often discussed in terms of communicative events or specific tasks, rather than pure linguistic forms. For example, Mitchell (1957, quoted in

Coulthard, 1977:5) divides sales transactions into a series of stages. No linguistic boundary markers are used since a stage is an abstract category. Stages are rather determined by the activities that are appropriate to them. A further example dealing with sales transactions can be found in Hasan (1985), where she divides texts into structural elements. These elements are, again, determined by the specific tasks the speaker accomplishes. Take the following quote from Hasan (1985:65) as an example:

Sales Request	Customer: Can I have half a dozen Granny Smiths?
Sales Enquiry	Customer: Are they local? Vendor: Yes, they are from the blue mountains.
Sales Closure	Vendor: Will that be all now? Customer: Yes, thank you.

As shown in the above, the sales transaction is divided into three stages: the sales request, the sales enquiry and the sales closure. These stages are related to the communicative events, or specific tasks the speaker accomplishes. At the same time, these stages also play the role of setting boundaries for the text. The criteria for realising the structural elements of the text are related to semantic properties (Hasan, 1985), and to the content rather than to linguistic forms. As Paltridge claims, the boundaries of texts are mainly determined by the content, and “it is a cognitive rather than linguistic sense that guides our perception of textual division” (Paltridge, 1994:295). In discourse analysis, rhetorical structures are often determined on the basis of this criterion, although the components of a text structure are given many other different names such as schematic structure (Martin, 1989), structural paragraphs (Longacre, 1992) and macro- and micro-structures (van Dijk, 1977). However, linguistic forms can, in turn, help to indicate how a structural element is realised as one kind of choice. For example, a sales request can be realised by an interrogative form, as in the above example, or by other forms, as long as these forms can express a request.

Similarly, Swales’ moves and steps can be seen as communicative events in discourse, which can also be considered as components of the rhetorical structure of a text. Moves can also be seen as having two attributes: indicating the communicative events or specific tasks the writer wishes to accomplish, and setting textual boundaries. These two

attributes are very closely related because the boundaries of the text will be determined by each communicative event. The criteria for identifying moves are, then, both non-linguistic and linguistic, with emphasis placed on the former. The non-linguistic element is related to content of the text and determines where a task, or a section of the text starts and where it ends, thus setting textual boundaries. The linguistic elements are forms mainly chosen for encoding moves. A typical move can be realised by a set of linguistic choices, of which the actual form found in the text is only one type. However, Swales (1981, 1986, 1990) contributes to the units of analysis in that he sees moves as related to the realisation of communicative purposes of genre.

In addition, moves can be explained further using schema theory. A text can be divided into a hierarchical set of stages. According to Swales (1990), a text belonging to a certain genre is seen as having the communicative purposes of the genre. A text is also seen as composed of a set of moves and steps. Therefore, in a text, communicative purposes can be seen as the highest level which is, in turn, related to moves and steps. A move can be seen as accomplishing a specific task and, at the same time, contributing to the realisation of the communicative purposes in general in so doing.

Through these kinds of interwoven relationships, Swales (1990) processes a text using an approach similar to top-down processing. First of all, he aims to find the communicative purposes of the genre, and then to identify moves and steps in order to see how they are related to the communicative purposes. Here there does not need to be a one-to-one correspondence between the communicative purposes and moves. A communicative purpose can be realised in one or more moves.

The relationship between moves and steps is of a 'consists of' nature and one move can consist of one or more steps. The steps are the lower level of the text, and represent smaller tasks a move can be divided into, or alternative strategies for realising the move. One move can be taken as one step if no further steps exist under this move. These steps can also contribute directly to the realisation of communicative purposes. Some steps within a move are compulsory and some are optional. In this way, choices are given to ways of realising communicative purposes, and a genre analyst or learner will not be confined by rigid rules. Instead, s/he can follow a reliable guideline linking the communicative purposes to the lower levels of moves and steps.

However, Swales' (1981, 1986, 1990) analysis mainly focuses on moves and steps, and lacks a thorough analysis as to how communicative purposes, or moves and steps, are realised in linguistic forms. This means that he mainly examines the major communicative events of a text, but does not examine fully how these are realised by linguistic choices. According to schema theory, moves and steps do not represent the bottom level of information processing because they are still what the reader or analyst abstracts from the content of the text. The bottom level of a text should refer to the data in the printed form – the linguistic forms. This study will give a more thorough analysis of linguistic forms. However, it will avoid detailed analysis of the actual forms in most cases and focus on the linguistic choices that are used as strategies to realise communicative purposes, moves and steps.

In this way, a primary network of top-down analysis will be applied in this study: communicative purposes are seen as the highest level, which are closely related to each of the lower levels, such as moves, steps and linguistic forms. On the other hand, these purposes are used as the key for determining moves and steps. The linguistic choices are seen as the specific strategies used to realise moves and steps.

In addition, a bottom-up process will also be applied where necessary, such as determining what meaning the specific linguistic choices can have, and how well these choices can be used to express moves and steps. One may note that it is the nature of choices that is important for this study. As noted earlier regarding the definition of genre, linguistic forms are seen as choices rather than something fixed to express communicative purposes. Any move may be realised by a number of forms, and a writer or learner can be provided with a set of these choices. S/he can then use them as constraints and conventions of writing the genre.

Therefore, I will not hesitate to adopt moves in my analysis. However, since the genres concerned in this study are related to letter forms, the moves will be divided into two kinds: one relating to the formulaic moves, eg. the use of headings, salutations, greetings, well-wishes, date and signature; and the other relating to the content moves that reside in the main body of the letter. A detailed study of these in each sales genre will be given in relevant chapters of this thesis.

4 Approaches used to analyse English business letters

There are varied approaches to genre study (see, for example, Bhatia, 1993; Shiffrin, 1994). However, the aim of this study is not to explore all these, but rather to focus on those relevant to the present research. Approaches used to analyse English business letters will be discussed first.

The genre analysis of English business letters is a rather new area and not very much research has yet been done. The relevant studies are Ghadessay's (1993) register analysis of business letters, and Bhatia's (1993) genre analysis of sales letters. Their analyses represent different levels of genre study: Ghadessay's (1993) study represents a surface-level description of register analysis in business letters; Bhatia (1993) represents a deeper level of genre analysis for English sales letters. Since their studies are related to both register and genre, these two terminologies will be discussed first.

4.1 Register vs. genre

The terms 'register' and 'genre' represent different levels of text organisation. Martin (1985:250) claims that genre is a system underlying register and constraining the register choices available to construct a text. In other words, Martin means that genre is a higher level of organisation where the communicative purposes and the discourse structure of the text are embedded, and register is a lower level of organisation reflected in the use of language and determined by genre. Couture (1986:82) further argues that the difference between register and genre is that genres are complete texts, such as a research report, while registers are related to linguistic choices, such as the language of scientific reporting. According to her, a research report should be separated from the language of scientific reporting. However, the research report and the language of scientific reporting are closely related and the research report is realised through the language of scientific reporting. Therefore, genre and register are different and, at the same time, they are closely related. Both Ghadessey (1993) and Bhatia (1993) appear to understand register and genre in the light of the above systemic explanation.

4.2 Register analysis of business letters

Following Halliday and Hasan (1985), Ghadessey (1993) discusses the register of business letters in terms of field, tenor and mode. Within the field of discourse, he uses Hasan's (1985) generic structure potential (GSP) to discuss the obligatory elements of business letters. According to Hasan (1985), some elements of a text are obligatory, and some are optional, and the obligatory elements are called GSP. A 'genre' is mainly defined by the existence of obligatory elements. In addition, Ghadessey (1993) combines the GSP with the speech act theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969, 1979), and claims that different speech acts represent different fields, thus requiring different realisations of the GSP. He also talks about the rule relationship between the participants in different speech act situations in the tenor of discourse. The interpersonal function determines the degree of politeness of the speaker or writer's use of language. Ghadessey relates the mode of discourse to the role of the language and points out that the language of business communication is that of persuasion, which is shown in the use of language of advertising.

Ghadessey (1993) studies the obligatory elements of business letters based on a corpus of 60 letters. The obligatory elements are composed of the R (response) element, the AI (addressing the issue) element, and the C (closing) element. The R element is the reference the writer makes to his/her business with the reader, such as an order, or inquiry, etc. The AI element is the most important section in the letter that tells the reader what the letter is about, such as a complaint, or sales, etc. The C section relates to how the letter is closed, such as 'yours sincerely', etc.

Ghadessey's research mainly focuses on the identification and analysis of the GSP elements of English business letters. His efforts are a valuable attempt at analysing authentic written materials, for before this, most analyses had focused on spoken business communication, as in the works of Mitchell (1957, quoted in Coulthard, 1977:5) and Hasan (1985). Ghadessey's findings include typical examples drawn from the corpus and provide very reliable evidence for the use of GSP. However, Ghadessey's study of English business letters is confined to a surface descriptive level and he does not undertake detailed analysis of speech act situations and the language of advertising, although this was one of the aims of the paper. Issues such as how different speech acts use different obligatory elements and how the language of advertising is applied to business letters as an obligatory element remain

largely unexplored. The reason may be that register analysis does not go any deeper than the analysis of forms, such as the obligatory elements, and separates communicative purposes from these forms. In spite of this, the discussion of obligatory elements is a promising attempt which can be used as a reference for analysing the features relating to obligatory moves and steps in sales genres in this study. However, analyses of this type will be related to the deeper level of the realisations of communicative purposes. The language of advertising will also be studied, as a strategy to realise the communicative purposes.

4.3 Bhatia's Genre analysis of sales letters

Compared with register analysis, Bhatia's (1993) analysis of English sales letters, mainly conducted in the framework of Swales (1990) genre theory, goes more deeply. As Drury (1995) comments, Bhatia has made an important contribution to genre analysis and its application in the field of English for specific purposes⁴. Bhatia not only describes how the genre is presented through language forms but also explains why the genre is written the way it is. In addition, Bhatia's analysis of sales letters indicates that genre theory can be used successfully to analyse professional use of language. Bhatia's analysis focuses on the following two aspects of Swales' model: determining communicative purposes and studying moves as structural development.

Following a top-down processing of information, Bhatia first states the communicative purposes of sales letters, and discusses how they are realised in a series of moves. Then he discusses some contextualised forms used in each move. These forms are similar to the linguistic forms discussed in this study. In this way, the linguistic forms within each move are seen as contributing to the overall realisation of communicative purposes.

To be specific, Bhatia emphasises that a sales letter may have the following purposes: capturing the attention of the reader, offering appraisal of the product, and encouraging further communications. These purposes can be expressed in terms of moves. In fact, Bhatia (1993:46 and 49) assigns a typical 7-move structure for sales letters as follows:

⁴ Although Bhatia (1993) analyses several professional genres, such as sales letters, job applications and legal documents, only his analysis of sales letters is discussed here.

- 1 Establishing credentials
- 2 Introducing the offer
- 3 Offering incentives
- 4 Enclosing documents
- 5 Soliciting response
- 6 Using pressure tactics
- 7 Ending politely

Move 2 can be further divided into the following steps:

- (a) Offering the product or service.
- (b) Essential detailing of the product or service.
- (c) Indicating value of the product or service.

Bhatia points out that Move 2 is the most essential part of the sales letter since the writer has to address the value of the product in order to meet the needs of the potential customers. These strategies, in turn, need to be realised by appropriate linguistic forms, and also by contextualisation, in Bhatia's words. A typical example of contextualisation is shown in Bhatia's analysis of the frequent use of noun phrases (NP) in sales letters. Take the following from Bhatia (1993:52) as an example:

Domo toilet partition is *as solid as a brick wall*! Domo incorporates *the latest German Technology* and *superior quality standards* to make it *a perfect system* for the toilet, especially wet toilets in public places.

In the above examples, the NP structures in italics are employed to give positive descriptions to the product. They can be used in a convenient way in different positions in a sentence to give or list positive evaluations. That is the reason why NP structure is frequently used as a common strategy in sales letters.

Bhatia's analysis of English sales letters therefore represents an extension of Swales' (1990) framework of genre analysis from academic writing to business writing. His analysis

of English sales letters will be used as a reference in discussing the moves and steps of Chinese sales letters. In addition, as mentioned by Vassileva (1996), Bhatia (1993) has made an important contribution by stressing the cognitive aspects of genre. This view makes it possible to look at the Chinese sales genres from a dynamic perspective, and this, in turn, can give some insight to the understanding of Chinese sales genres.

5 Chinese sources relating to the study of genre

Relevant approaches can also be found in Chinese. Chinese sources relating to the study of genre can be divided into two main approaches: the descriptive and the prescriptive. There is a very rich descriptive classical tradition of studying genre which can be traced to the fifth century from Liu Xie's (Shih, 1959) work in classical Chinese up to the present time. This tradition continues into the modern rhetoric as reflected in Chen's (1947, 1980, 1985) work and also in contemporary approaches to composition writing (eg: Wang and Wu 1990; Wu, 1988; Yang, 1983; Zhang, 1981; Zhang, 1983a). Unfortunately, this approach has not been applied to the analysis of Chinese business writing, which is dominated by the prescriptive approach as exemplified by business textbooks. Only a prescriptive approach is currently used in teaching business writing in mainland China. Therefore, one task of this thesis is to continue the traditional descriptive approach and to apply and expand it in the study of Chinese sales genres. First of all, the descriptive and prescriptive approaches will be discussed.

5.1 Prescriptive and descriptive approaches

The prescriptive approach prescribes genres, and is characterised by assigning rigid rules to genres. In other words, genres are tested by applying these fixed rules. Freedman and Macdonald (1992) connect prescriptive approaches with three metaphors: genre as label, as recipe and as game. The label metaphor suggests that genres are seen as a category system, and each genre can be examined by assigning the text to a certain category. The recipe metaphor and the game metaphor refer to a genre as a series of rules. These three metaphors are basically the same and represent the traditional preoccupation with genre as a series of rules (Liddicoat, 1996). Therefore all three can be encapsulated as recipe style. The assumption underlying the recipe style is: 'Genre A (label) consists of X features (recipe)'

(Freadman and Macdonald, 1992:24). According to the recipe metaphor, genres are supposed to correspond to the prescribed generic classification. This prescriptive approach is widely used in the available Chinese literature on sales genres — business textbooks, which will be examined in detail in the relevant chapters of this thesis.

In contrast, a fourth metaphor, the template, represents a descriptive approach. The template metaphor represents genre as a practice, a rhetoric that determines the contours of textuality to be used (Freadman and Macdonald, 1992:20). It is an approach based on describing the language by ascertaining the existing principles and guidelines underlying genres. This understanding of genre does not see genre as a set of fixed rules, but as a device that allows for choices in the construction of a text within the constraints of a conventional cultural practice. Shopen (1993:3) has maintained that genres should be seen as cultural activities. Here cultural activities can refer to the culture in general and the culture of the business discourse community. The template approach is also the approach underlying the present discussion of sales genres. The features of a genre will be seen as emerging from the cultural conventions of a text in order to achieve the communicative purposes. These communicative purposes are the essential element in writing sales genres.

The ‘template’ approach has been used in Chinese classical and modern rhetorical theory. Although these studies may not be directly related to sales genres, they will shed some light on understanding sales genres. ‘Rhetoric’ here refers to the study of genre and the use of the appropriate linguistic forms to express the aim in a certain context (Chen, 1947, 1980, 1985). The earliest systematic study of genre in Chinese was conducted by Liu Xie in the fifth century, and this is also the earliest example of using a template approach to describe genres in Chinese written discourse. This historical approach will be discussed in detail below.

5.2 Historical overview of Chinese genre study

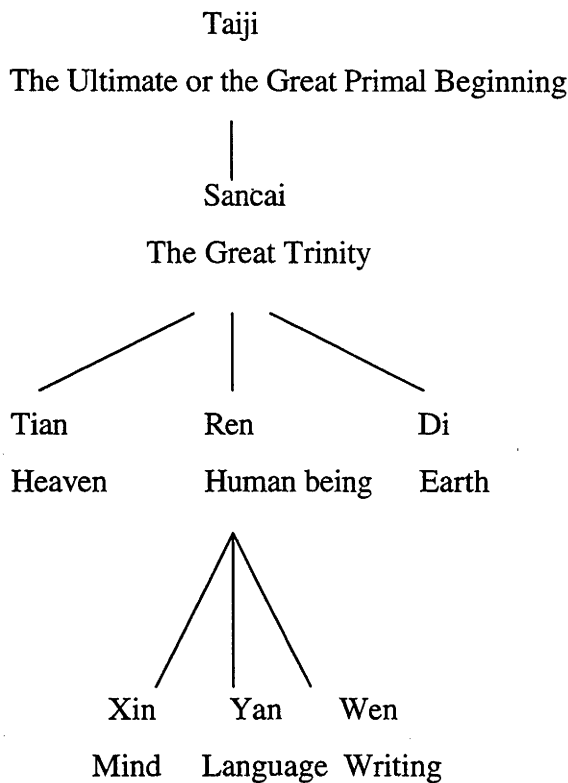
Liu Xie’s work The literary mind and the carving of dragons (Shih, 1959), written in the fifth century, embodies the earliest systematic approach to Chinese written genres. Since this book embraces a wide range of topics covering all the written genres which existed at that time and also the writing process, it is looked on as a treatise of rhetoric on the rhetoric of written discourse in general (Zhao, 1990:16), although the most common interpretation is

that this book is a theoretical treatise on literary creation (eg: Cao, 1982; Huang, 1969). As early as the fifth century, this book reflected similar ideas of the purpose of writing and the nature of professional membership of a discourse community to those discussed in Swales (1990). Liu Xie's work has its own special contribution in relation to Chinese written discourse, which is the discussion of how writing reflects different writer-reader relationships. This idea laid the foundation for the later division of 'gongwen' (official letters) into 'shangxing, pingxing and xiaxing' genres as discussed in Chapter 1. All these aspects will be discussed in more detail below.

5.2.1 Liu Xie's Daoism and the purpose of writing

In Liu Xie's work, the purpose of writing is deeply rooted in Daoism. Daoism here mainly refers to Confucian Daoism, as in the preface of his book, Liu Xie depicts Confucius as the 'Sage' and 'Master' and reveals admiration for his works. His belief in Confucian Daoism can also be seen in his emphasis on the role of writing in the preservation of the social order. To use his own words, he says that he wants to deal with texts which are concerned with keeping the 'Five Rites straight and wide-spread' (Shih, 1959:10). This idea is reflected in Liu Xie's 'wen zhi dao' or the 'patterns of the universe' (Shih: 1959:9). This is also the framework of his theory for understanding written genres as shown in the Figure 2, which has been revised from Zhao (1990:84):

Figure 2. Liu Xie’s ‘wen zhi dao’



Liu Xie’s ‘wen zhi dao’ refers to the principles of understanding writing as having two layers of meaning. First, Liu Xie compares writing to all other elements in the universe as shown in Figure 2. The universe or the ‘taiji’ is composed of heaven, earth and humans. The earth represents ‘yin’, the female principle and heaven represents ‘yang’, the male principle. Both the heaven and the earth follow their own principles of development. Writing is the higher form of language, which springs from the development of mind and language. Human beings are seen as creative, as the ‘mind of the universe’ having ‘spirituality’ (Shih, 1959:9). As is the case with all the other elements in heaven and earth, writing has its own principles. Since human beings are part of the universe, they have to obey the laws of the universe and follow the ‘yin’ and ‘yang’ principles in their writing practices. Second, Liu Xie claims that writing should reflect the principles of society and the natural phenomenon of the universe. To do this, the choice of rhetoric must be ‘flexibly adaptable to all changing situations’ (Shih, 1959:15). This sentence can be interpreted as: the changing situation may call for different

genres of writing; the choice of rhetoric may refer to linguistic choices. In other words, different linguistic choices are preferred by different genres determined by their own communicative purposes. That means writing is governed by the principles of the universe and society and reflects these principles. In this respect, what Liu Xie's claims here is similar to contemporary understandings of the communicative purposes of genre. In addition, it also coincides with the view which the present study emphasises — that genre is closely related to social context.

5.2.2 Expert members

The concept of expert membership of a discourse community is also, in a way, reflected in Liu Xie's work when he discusses 'shengren' (sages). According to Liu Xie, 'shengren' are those who have mastered the pattern of the writing (Shih, 1959:258). This definition of mastery can be interpreted as understanding the communicative purpose of writing and the conventions of writing. For example, Confucius wrote historical records and narratives. His writings are characterised by true feelings and appropriate language. This kind of understanding is further elaborated as Liu Xie explains that the reason for the production of good writing is that 'shengren' explore and understand the principles of the universe and society, and their writings reflect these principles. The written genres are what they are familiar with, and they know the shared conventions of the genres they are writing, and therefore, they can 'use simple language to express their purposes, or use detailed descriptions to explain their meanings' (Shih, 1959:27). From this perspective, the 'shengren' can be understood as parallel to Swales' (1990) expert members, because they understand the purpose of writing and can produce the best pattern of the written genre. Their talent or their control over the conventions of the written genre, comes from their professional practice in writing the genre.

5.2.3 Liu Xie's division of 'wen' and 'bi'

An emphasis on purposes and the social function of writing can also be seen in Liu Xie's division of 'wen' (the literary) and 'bi' (the non-literary), which is acknowledged as one of the greatest contributions he made to the study of Chinese written genres. He criticises those who pay attention only to 'wen', and follow the rigid rhymed forms in

writings. During Liu Xie’s time, many scholars or poets were only interested in ‘wen’ and despised ‘bi’. This group, historically known as mystics, wrote in the form of poetry, and thought that this was a form of high embellishment. Liu Xie meant to challenge this artificial tendency in writing by drawing scholars’ attention to ‘bi’ as well. To Liu Xie, ‘bi’ was also very important in writing, for it was free from verse forms, and thus offered more freedom for the expression of ideas. Many literary works, such as historical records, are better written in this style. Written discourse would not be complete without the combination of both ‘wen’ and ‘bi’. Liu Xie catalogues all the 32 written genres used up to his time, dividing them into the two major groups of ‘wen’ and ‘bi’. All these genres are shown in the following table:

Table 1. Liu Xie’s Typology of 32 Types of Discourse.

<u>Wen</u>	<u>Bi</u>
Shi (Poetry)	Shizhuan (Historical writings)
Yuefu (Musical poetry)	Zhuzi (Speculative essays)
Fu (Narrative poetry)	Lun (Treatise)
Song (Ode)	Shuo (Discussion)
Zan (Pronouncement)	Zhao (Edict)
Zhu (Sacrificial prayer)	Ce (Script)
Meng (Oath of agreement)	Xi (War proclamation)
Ming (Inscription)	Yi (Dispatch)
Zhen (Exhortation)	Fengshan (Sacrifice to spirits)
Lei (Elegy)	Zhang (Memorial 1)
Bei (Inscription)	Biao (Memorial 2)
Ai (Lament)	Zou (Memorial 3)
Diao (Condolence)	Qi (Memorial 4)
Zawen (Miscellaneous writings)	Yi (Commentary)
Xieyin (Satire)	Dui (Dialogue)
	Shu (Diary)
	Ji (Epistolary writing)

(Quoted from Zhao, 1990:104)

Of the 32 types, in Table 1, the types of ‘bi’ outnumber the types of ‘wen’: 17 vs. 15. This indicates that Liu Xie pays a lot of attention to ‘yingyongwen’, or in today’s words, professional writings. Within these types, eight can be classified as ‘gongwen’ (official documents): ‘zhao’ (edict), ‘ce’ (script), ‘xi’ (war proclamation), ‘yi’ (dispatch), ‘zhang’ (Memorial 1), ‘biao’ (memorial 2), ‘zou’ (memorial 3) and ‘qi’ (memorial 4). In addition to this, a large percentage of ‘shu’ (letters) and ‘ji’ (epistolary writing) were used as ‘gongwen’ as well. These eight types of ‘gongwen’ can fit into today’s three genres of ‘xiaxing, pingxing and shangxing’ genres (cf. Chapter 1) as summarised in the following table:

Table 2. The ‘Gongwen’ Types Found in Liu Xie Work

Genres	Tyes of ‘gongwen’	Social functions
Xiaxing	‘zhao’ and ‘ce’	Issuing orders
Pingxing	‘xi’ and ‘yi’	Diplomatic official letters
Shangxing	‘zhang’, ‘biao’, ‘zou’ and ‘qi’	Expressing views to the emperor

Note: In the above table, the three genres are the author’s own classification, while the social functions are summarised according to Liu Xie’s explanation in his work.

Liu Xie’s emphasis on the study of ‘bi’, as discussed above, has a far-reaching significance. Even today, ‘yingyongwen’ is not a very well studied area and needs more attention. This point will be discussed further in this chapter. In this respect, the present thesis will study the sales genres or one type of ‘bi’ in Liu Xie’s terms and contribute to the study of professional writing of business communication.

Another important contribution of Liu Xie’s work, which has not been mentioned by earlier studies, is that he explored writer-reader relationships in different types of ‘yingyongwen’, and especially those of ‘gongwen’. Although Liu Xie did not classify the three genres as ‘xiaxing, pingxing and shangxing’ in his work, he had already noticed the different relationships between writer and reader in different types of writing in his discussion of the above ‘gongwen’ genres.

Liu Xie explains that ‘the distinction of men of honour and nobility is brought out by the attitude of reverence expressed in the ceremonial form’ (Shih, 1959:146)’. This form is equivalent to today’s ‘xiaxing’ genre. Liu Xie further explains that the words of a ruler should be lofty and powerful and ‘they are suspended on high for all to look up to’ (Shih,

1959:114). Reading the letters of 'shu', a kind of epistolary writing which belongs to the 'pingxing' genre, according to today's classification, 'one feels he is talking face to face with the authors' (Shih, 1959:145). 'Face to face' here indicates a close distance and equal level. 'Zhou' or 'memorial 3', or 'biao' of 'shangxing' genre in today's classification, should be written in the spirit of reverence without any sign of fear, and should be succinct without showing any arrogance (Shih, 1959:147). Liu Xie pays attention to sociolinguistic factors and observes that the style of writing is influenced by reader-writer relationships. However, he does not describe in terms of linguistic forms how the genres differ, such as what forms are used to achieve the effect of a free conversation with the author, what forms should be used to achieve the power of language, or what forms should be used to express reverence without showing any fear.

Above all, Liu Xie uses a descriptive approach to discuss written genres. His approach can be explicated by his words. In the preface, Liu Xie explains that his approach mainly includes four steps: classifying the genres, tracing each genre back to its source in order to make clear its development, defining a specific genre, selecting existing works that reflect this genre (Shih, 1959:6). According to his explanation, Liu Xie studied a genre from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives. He describes the features of the existing genres rather than prescribing rules for a certain genre. In addition, he relates the study of the written discourse to the purpose and social function of the writing. Above all, he explores the writer-reader relationship in the writings of 'bi'. All this offers theoretical and historical evidence for the link between a genre and social structure and the writer-reader relationship. These relationships, as well as the purpose of writing, will be a special concern of this study. The present study will use a similar descriptive approach to discuss Chinese sales genres and explore how they reflect these relationships at various levels. In addition, the present study will pay more attention to the specific linguistic forms and rhetorical structure each sales genre employs.

5.3 An example of genre study from composition writing

Liu Xie's approach has been inherited today in the area of composition writing. Scholars in this area (eg. : LÜ et al., 1979; Wang and Wu 1990; Wang and Yang 1988; Wu, 1988; Yang, 1983; Zhang, 1981; Zhang, 1983a) mainly explore the principles of writing in

general, which are also the principles used in mainland China to analyse literary writings. For example, Zhang (1981) explains that writing is composed of three elements:

Tízhǐ (purposes)

Tícái (content)

Jiégòu (structure)

‘Tízhǐ’ (purposes) refer to the main ideas in the composition which the writer tries to convey and is quite similar to Swales’ (1990) communicative purposes. Here a text or composition is seen as belonging to a certain genre, although Chinese scholars tend to discuss writing in a general sense. ‘Tícái’ (content) refers to the material or information to be included in the writing. ‘Jiégòu’ (the structure) refers to the organisation of the writing. The above order also indicates the steps involved in writing a composition. A writer has to follow this order and have clear ‘tízhǐ’ (purposes) first, then decide on the ‘tícái’ and include the content that best reflects these purposes. The next step is to work over the ‘jiégòu’ (structure) of the text and decide on the organisation of the content.

According to Zhang (1981), the purposes of writing are the most important of the three elements. Without a purpose, there is no point writing a composition. When we start writing a composition, we must ‘lìyǐ’ (establish purposes). However, these purposes come from the writer’s understanding of social reality, or his/her observation of life – the world schema. Therefore clear purposes are based on the writer’s correct understanding of social reality and life. The second step is to decide on the ‘tícái’ (content). This involves finding out what is relevant and what is not relevant to the purposes the writer intends to convey. Only relevant content should be included in the writing. The last step is to decide on the appropriate ‘jiégòu’ (structure) and organise all the ideas in an appropriate way. The structure of a composition is composed of:

Duànluò (paragraphing)

Céngcǐ (idea units)

Guòdù (transition)

Zhàoyǐng (coordination and coherence)

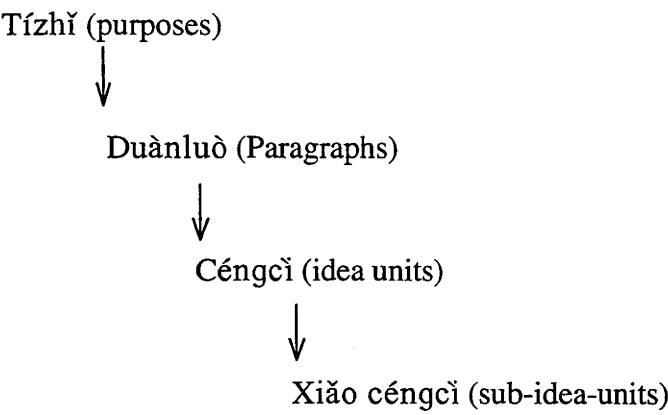
Kāitóu (beginnings)

Shōuwěi (endings)

‘Guòdù’ (transition) and ‘zhàoyǐng’ (coordination and coherence) refer to how a text is linked, such as the use of connectives, etc. ‘Kāitóu’ and ‘shōuwěi’ refer, respectively, to the beginning, where the writer should attract the reader’s attention with the ‘tízhǐ’ (purpose) and the ending, which should relate to the ‘tízhǐ’ and leave a deep impression about the main purpose. This method of beginning and ending is also called ‘shōuwěi zhàoyǐng’ (echoing the beginning and ending). ‘Duànluò’ (paragraphing) and ‘céngcǐ’ (idea units) are related to the overall organisation of a text and are of special interest for this study, and therefore will be discussed in depth below.

Zhang (1981) points out that ‘duànluò’ (paragraphs) and ‘céngcǐ’ (idea units) are two different things. ‘Duànluò’ (paragraph) is a natural division of a text, while ‘céngcǐ’ (idea unit) can be composed of one or more paragraphs. The latter can be further divided into ‘xiǎo céngcǐ’ (sub-idea-units). Zhang studies layers of arrangement of ideas within paragraphs only as a reference to locate ‘céngcǐ’ (ideas units’). Zhang also points out that the criteria for determining ‘céngcǐ’ (ideas units) are based on ‘tízhǐ’ (purposes) and ‘tícai’ (content) of the writing, and text and paragraphs are the form of conveying the purposes. These purposes are realised in the idea units of different layers. In this respect, his approach is quite similar to Swales’ (1990) approach of studying a text. Both of them follow a top-down mode to process information. Both focus on the purposes as the criterion for determining lower levels of information. Zhang’s (1981) approach can be summarised as follows:

Figure 3. The top-down processing in Chinese composition writing



In the figure above, determining the idea units involves cognitively structuring a text using a top-down processing model. The analyst then has to study the paragraphs in order to find out the idea units. These ideas can be found through the organisation of paragraphs according to the order and development of content. Zhang discusses the following three ways of arranging levels of ideas. The first is to arrange ideas according to a ‘shíjiān guānxì’ (temporal sequence). Since this type of text begins, develops and ends following the temporal sequence, the order of time is a clue to trace the development of ideas. The second is to arrange ideas according to ‘luóǐ guānxì’ (the order of logic relations). This order follows the pattern of raising a problem, analysing the problem and solving the problem. The third is to arrange ideas according to different aspects of an issue. That is to classify similar things into groups of ideas and see the links in between these groups. These principles of identifying idea units will also be important clues in the study of Chinese sales genres in this thesis.

5.4 An example of genre study from modern rhetoric

Liu Xie’s tradition of genre study also has an ongoing tradition in the study of ‘xiūcíxué’ (rhetoric), such as indicated in Chen Wangdao’s (1947) Xiucixue fafan (An Introduction to Rhetoric). This work is a milestone in Chinese rhetoric, for it is the first to discuss the use of ‘baihua’ (vernacular) as opposed to classical Chinese. His work still exercises a strong influence on genre study in China today.

Chen's major contribution lies in his theory of 'xiāojí xīucí' (negative rhetoric) and 'jǐjí xīucí' ('positive' rhetoric). These do not indicate the literal meanings of 'negative' and 'positive', but divide Chinese rhetoric into two varieties (Zhang, 1983b:42). According to Chen (1947), 'xiāojí xīucí' (negative rhetoric) stresses clarity of meaning, and is mainly used in scientific reports and legal documents, etc. 'Jǐjí xīucí' (positive rhetoric) is used to express people's feelings in literary writings, such as is shown by the use of figures of speech. He further explains that 'xiāojí xīucí' is based on the use of 'jǐshù de yǔyán' (language to narrate or record), by which he means the main function of the language is to make people understand the meaning of a text. 'Jǐjí xīucí' (positive rhetoric) is based on 'biǎoxiàn de yǔyán' (language to express feelings), by which he means that the major function is to express what one feels. He provides some examples of this style in poetry and lyrics, such as the use of metaphor, hyperbole, etc. This division of rhetoric is quite similar to Liu Xie's 'wen' (literary style) and 'bi' (non-literary style). 'Xiāojí xīucí' is related to the study of non-literary styles, while 'jǐjí xīucí' is related to the study of literary styles. Since this thesis mainly concerns 'gongwen' (official letters), 'xiāojí xīucí' will be the focus of our discussion.

Chen lists four major principles for 'xiāojí xīucí' (negative rhetoric), which are:

Yǐyǐ míngquè (clarity of ideas)

Lùncǐ tōngshùn (coherence in word order)

Cíjù píngjūn (appropriate choice of words and sentences)

ānpái wěnmǐ (appropriate arrangement of words and sentences)

'Yǐyǐ míngquè' (clarity of ideas), according to Chen (1947:72), refers to two processes: first, the writer/speaker has to be clear what s/he wants to express; secondly, s/he has to express these ideas in clear forms. The first process can be understood as focusing on communicative purposes, as they relate to the ideas the writer/addresser wants to convey. The second process can be understood as choosing language forms to realise these purposes clearly. Therefore, Chen points out the relationship between purposes and language forms.

However, Chen does not elaborate on how the meaning can be achieved at various levels of a text. His major concern lies in the study of appropriate use of vocabulary to convey meanings clearly and unmistakably. According to Chen (1947:75), if words are used to carry clear meanings, they can then form clear sentences, paragraphs, chapters and the text. From this we can see that Chen insists that the appropriate choice of words is the basis of clarity to express ideas.

Chen's discussion of 'lùncì tōngshùn' (coherence in word order) is closely related to communicative purposes, since he stresses that the way words are organised should indicate the meaning of the text. Chen (1947:81) exemplifies this point with the phrase 'hēchá' (drink tea), which is the right word order to indicate coherent meaning in Chinese, but 'chá'hē' (tea drink) is not. Although he is only discussing the word order, Chen points out an important aspect of language, which is that the order or sequence of elements in a text is related to the meaning of the text, and to what the addresser intends to communicate. Therefore, it is important to follow the appropriate order in order to achieve cohesion of meaning.

'Cíjù píngjūn' (appropriate choice of words and sentences) refers to choosing words easy to understand. In other words, only words and expressions that help the reader or addressee understand the communicative purposes should be used. Words that make these purposes difficult to understand, such as obsolete words from classical Chinese, were not appropriate choices. Unambiguous words enable the reader or addressee to concentrate on the meaning of the text. Otherwise s/he has to spend a lot of time figuring out the meaning of the difficult words rather than following the ideas of the text. From this we can see that Chen talks about the relationship between communicative purposes and linguistic forms, and the forms that should serve these purposes.

According to Chen, there are two criteria for 'ānpái wěnmǐ' (appropriate arrangement of words and sentences). First of all, Chen (1947:90) explains that words or sentences have to be arranged to 'qièjǐ' (meet purposes); second, they have to 'qièjǐng' (meet the context). Chen (1947:91) exemplifies this point by noting the different nuances of words, such as the conceited attitude is shown in 'gaoshi' (official notice) and the modest attitude in 'gaobai' (announcement). Here Chen is touching upon the issue that

sociolinguistic factors influence the choice of words. For example, the writer/addresser should adopt appropriate genre in relation to the purpose or context of the text.

From the above discussion, we can see that Chen stresses the importance of communicative purposes, and these are used as a starting point to determine the choice of words and sentences. He also discusses the links between words, context and purposes. However, Chen only points out general principles relating to clarity of meaning, he does not discuss the overall structure of a text, such as how the ideas are organised at various levels. In spite of this, Chen's principles are purpose-oriented and can be used as a guideline in discussing 'xiāojí xiūcí' (negative rhetoric), such as the writing of sales genres. This rhetoric is mostly applicable to the study of genres in 'yingyongwen' (the practical writings). The reason for this is that the function of 'yingyongwen' is related to communicating with the reader for pragmatic reasons. Thus understanding of this message by the reader becomes the most important factor.

However, although Chen devoted the majority of the discussion in Xiucixue fafan (An introduction to rhetoric) to written discourse, the proportion of discussion on 'jǐjí xiūcí' (positive rhetoric) (5 chapters) much outweighs that of the 'xiāojí xiūcí' (negative rhetoric) (1 chapter). So 'negative rhetoric' is not as fully explored as 'positive rhetoric'. Although these weak points have been pointed out by some modern Chinese rhetoricians (eg, Zheng, 1983), there has not been any systematic study done yet. As a consequence, many works on 'xiūcí' (rhetoric) (eg: Ni, 1984; Wang and Wang, 1982; Wang, 1983; Zhang, 1954; Yang, 1964) still emphasise the aspect of 'jǐjí xiūcí' (positive rhetoric), while little discussion has been devoted to 'xiāojí xiūcí' (negative rhetoric).

One of the major tasks of this study is to promote the study of 'xiāojí xiūcí' (negative rhetoric) and determine these patterns in sales genres. In fact, many of the aspects of our discussion so far, such as the structure of texts and the development of ideas are related to the topic of 'negative rhetoric'.

5.5 The prescriptive approach

Unlike the template approach discussed in both classical and modern Chinese genre study, business writing textbooks do not seem to follow the descriptive tradition. These

textbooks rather follow a prescriptive or 'recipe' approach and focus on discussing the rules or surface structures of business letters. Actually, this kind of approach is also used in discussing the writing of 'yingyongwen' (practical writings) in general, and researchers tend to provide a manual for writing these genres. Since the focus of this study is on sales genres, only relevant textbooks on business writing will be discussed.

Business writing has become an important subject in tertiary writing classes, especially in business universities, since the economic 'opening-up' in China. The sudden need for this subject has brought about problems relating to teaching curriculum and materials. For many universities, business Chinese is a new course, and scholars are beginning to compile textbooks for it. During my fieldwork in China, I visited five universities that taught business Chinese. I found they used five different textbooks compiled by various scholars (Chen 1991; Chen and Wang 1994; Gu 1995; He and Lü 1991; Li 1983 and Li 1990). However, these textbooks are basically the same in content. All of them strive to prescribe rules, and provide definitions and guidelines for each type of business writing. They lay emphasis on prescriptions for business letters, while ignoring or paying little attention to business writing practice. For example, the textbook prescriptions for sales letters follow very similar principles and one text can be taken as representative of the whole range of textbooks. Gu (1995) is discussed here. Gu (1995: 174) argues that sales letters should use simple language and structures. According to Gu, a sales letter is composed of a heading, a salutation, the body of the letter, and a signature, and it should not have greetings or well-wishes. Since these prescriptions refer to the rules to be followed and how a sales letter is structured into different sections, it is a typical recipe approach. Similar prescribed advice can be found in relation to other sales genres, such as sales invitations, and sales 'tongzhi'. All of the prescribed rules for these genres will be discussed in detail in later chapters. In spite of their prescriptive nature, textbooks represent the major Chinese source directly related to the study of sales genres. The rules they advocate will be used in this thesis as a reference to determine to what degree these prescribed rules reflect the actual writing practice of business communication.

6 Conclusion

This chapter discusses a number of related theories to be used in analysing Chinese sales genres. The dominant approach to be used is a combined one based on Swales' (1990) genre approach and schema theory (Bartlett, 1932; Rumelhart and Ortony; 1977; Rumelhart, 1980). Swales' approach has its strength in the analysis of the discourse community and communicative purposes, but does not consider fully the cognitive analysis of text structure in terms of knowledge structures. The schema approach, when combined with Swales' genre study, can provide what the above theory lacks, thus enabling a fuller analysis. For example, the world and formal schemata can be used as a reliable prerequisite for identifying communicative purposes. The combined approach thus offers a better solution to genre study than either of the individual approaches. In addition, the study of English sales letters, especially by Bhatia (1993) points out a need to study professional genres in relation to communicative purposes.

Other theories from Chinese sources will also contribute to my analysis, such as Liu Xie's ideas on Chinese written discourse, and Chinese scholars' theories on composition writing. These Chinese sources share striking similarities with the combined approach this paper intends to undertake. For example, Liu Xie's emphasis on the purpose of writing and the concept of 'shengren' (sages or expert members) coincide with some aspects of Swales' (1990) genre approach. Chen (1947) has established some important theories on the analysis of genre. However, his contributions remain mainly in the area of literary genre studies. Chinese composition theory also shares some similarity with Swales' approach. For example, both are concerned with the purposes of writing, and both use a top-down processing model to study the development of ideas in a text. This is not a coincidence, because genre reflects the social reality and the organisation of a text reflects some general principles of writing. However, this consistency in the Western and Eastern traditions mainly relates to understanding the cognitive aspects of written discourse, and by no means ignores the cultural differences. This is another aspect, which will be discussed where relevant.

In addition, current research on Chinese business writing in mainland China seems to be dominated by a recipe or prescriptive approach. This needs to be developed in the spirit of the Chinese descriptive tradition exhibited in Liu Xie (Shih, 1959) and Chen (1947). Above all, business Chinese, including sales genres, needs to be studied with a combined

approach such as that proposed in this chapter. This will be a central task of the present study. At the same time, further research will be conducted into an area which is often emphasised, but not thoroughly studied — experts' attitudes within a discourse community. The purpose is to study their knowledge structures in terms of world schemata and the conventions of writing.

Chapter 3. Research design

1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design of this study. The research in each genre involves collecting and analysing data. There are two kinds of data: primary data comprising authentic letters and the data from questionnaire and interviews. The analysis is based on these two sources of data. This chapter will describe the procedures followed in the collection of the primary data, and the administration of the questionnaire and interviews. It will then outline how both the primary data and the questionnaire and interviews will be analysed in the chapters that follow.

2 The data

The primary data is drawn from authentic letters which were collected through the cooperation of five enterprise managers from five different enterprises in mainland China. They sent me photocopies of authentic letters with some confidential details such as addresses and telephone numbers erased. Altogether they sent me 242 letters. Among them, are sales letters, sales inquiries, application letters, sales invitations, and sales ‘tongzhi’ (circulars). Out of these letters, I selected 60 on a random basis from the three sales genres I propose to examine. These 60 letters are made up of 20 sales letters, 20 sales invitations, and 20 sales ‘tongzhi’. Each of the twenty letters was used as the basis for the analysis. However, although this database represents a random selection, there were some criteria for this section. These criteria were mainly used to guarantee the right choice of a genre, and to exclude those letters which do not belong to the genre concerned.

For example, sales letters were selected based on the following criteria: Firstly, all the letters should have a recognisable letter format. This criterion ruled out a large number of advertising materials which were not in the form of a letter, although they may have been related to sales promotions. Second, I wanted letters promoting a wide range of products, such as computers, fax-machines, telephones, and pesticides. Third, I wanted

letters written to equals⁵ expressing an equal writer-reader relationship. By equal relationship, I mean that there was no institutional superior and subordinate relationship involved.

Sales invitations are selected based on the following criteria:

Firstly, the letters had to be invitations, with the term ‘yaoqingxin’ (invitation) written in the heading, and this ruled out those letters that do not have headings although inviting may be expressed in the content. Invitation headings were preferred because headings in an invitation are an important characteristic of an invitation. Second, they had to be letters written to equal enterprises which do not have any ‘xiaxing’ or ‘shangxing’ relationship with the writer.

Sales ‘tongzhi’ were selected using the following criteria:

Firstly, the letters had to be ‘tongzhi’ and all included this term in the heading. Second, I only selected sales ‘tongzhi’ and did not include those that are not directly related to sales, such as conference ‘tongzhi’ or government ‘tongzhi’.

In the thesis, some information of the letters regarding contact details, writers’ names and so on are left out because of confidentiality.

A second source of data was gathered from questionnaires and interviews (See Appendix 4-6). These were conducted among two groups of native speakers who were chosen on a voluntary basis. One group was enterprise managers, who represented the business writing discourse community and the other group was business students, who represented the business writing learning discourse community.

The student group consists of one hundred business students from Henan Institute of Finance and Economics. They were second year undergraduates majoring in accounting and commerce. These students had all taken a business writing course in their first year.

The manager group consists of one hundred managers from twenty companies from five cities: Zhengzhou, Beijing, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Kaifeng. These five cities were located from the Southern border to the North and not confined by locality, thus representing Chinese companies in a general sense. The managers were also selected on a voluntary basis. The managers all had at least university undergraduate education. Some even had an MA in management or business. They had all worked in their enterprises for

⁵ ‘Equals’ in this chapter refers to institutional distance, and the writer does not have any ‘xiaxing’ or ‘shangxing’ relationship with the reader (see Chapter 1).

more than three years and had experience in reading and writing business letters. Therefore their attitudes can be taken to represent professional attitudes, and to reflect the shared conventions of the business community.

The age range within each group does not indicate any significant difference. The students age ranges from 20 to 26, while the managers range from 30 to 40. This will not affect the analysis within each group because each group is taken as representative of each discourse community rather than individuals.

3 The administration of questionnaire forms and interviews

Altogether, there were three different questionnaire forms. There was one questionnaire for sales letters, one for sales invitations, and one for sales 'tongzhi'. Each was completed by the two groups of native speakers, ie. enterprise managers and business writing students. The time required to fill in each questionnaire form was about one hour. After this, ten follow-up interviews took place with participants from each group based on the questionnaire results. Further details are given below.

3.1 The questionnaires

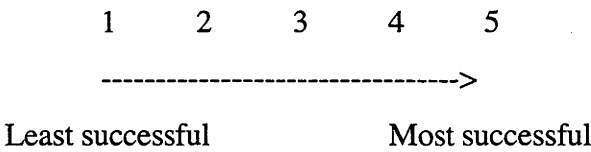
Each questionnaire form was given to one group at a time, either managers or students. That means each group participated three times in the process. First, a questionnaire form was given to one group of native speakers. Since it was easy to gather the students, one questionnaire was normally done by this group in a single session. One questionnaire form given to managers took a much longer time, because of the difficulty of organising a meeting of participants. The questionnaire forms then had to be distributed to five to ten managers each time in a company, and to be collected later on. Therefore it required several occasions to complete one questionnaire form. The results of both groups were analysed and compared with the other group to find if there were any differences between the two groups, and what these could suggest.

The questionnaire involved two tasks (see Appendix 2). The first was to grade the importance of communicative purposes, formulaic moves and linguistic forms. Here formulaic components were deliberately chosen because of their easy management in the questionnaire. The content of the questionnaire was related to the top-down processing

model. Questions were asked first of all to determine the understanding of the communicative purposes. Then questions were asked about the lower levels of moves, steps and linguistic forms related to the use of formulaic components. The purpose of this task was to find how the understanding of communicative purposes was related to the lower level choices.

The second task was to ask native speakers to identify the most and least successful letters. In this task, the native speakers were given five letters of each type to grade each time. Only five letters were chosen, because it was impossible to ask them to read all the twenty letters during the one-hour questionnaire time. The five letters from each genre were chosen based on a preliminary questionnaire conducted in Canberra among ten native speakers who were graduate students from mainland China. They were asked to grade each of the twenty letters from 1-5. The five letters were chosen on the basis that they would represent the twenty letters in the corpus in both content and form. They were ranked to present the various levels of effectiveness as well. For example, the letter that gained the highest or lowest points, and those that gained the medium level points were chosen. On this basis, the five were then taken to reflect the whole corpus.

The native speakers were asked to perform the following tasks. The first is to read and grade the letters from 1-5, as indicated in the following scales:



Grade 5 indicates the most successful, while grade 1 indicates the least. The native speakers were asked to mark each letter and give it a grade. The mean score of each letter was then calculated and the most and the least successful letters of each genre were identified. However, in this thesis, only the managers' grading of the five letters will be discussed because of the following two reasons. The first reason is related to space limitations. The second reason is that the focus of this study is to explore the experts' views and reflect the writing conventions of the sales genres as noted in Chapter 2. The mean scores for each of the genres are shown below:

Sales letters:

Letter 9:	4.25 points
Letter 7:	3.36 points
Letter 4:	2.8 points
Letter 17:	2.32 points
Letter 8	1.52 points

Sales invitations:

Letter 6:	4.05 points
Letter 15:	3.34 points
Letter 3:	2.75 points
Letter 11:	2.09 points
Letter 2:	1.64 points

Sales 'tongzhi':

Letter 6	4.12 points
Letter 3	2.98 points
Letter 16	2.81 points
Letter 4	1.97 points
Letter 12	1.34 points

Thus the most successful letter for each genre is the letter that gained the highest mean score, such as Letter 9 of sales letters, Letter 6 of sales invitations, and Letter 6 of sales 'tongzhi'. The least successful for each genre is the letter that gained the lowest mean score, such as Letter 8 of sales letters, Letter 2 of sales invitations, and Letter 12 of sales 'tongzhi'. Both the most and least successful letters will be analysed in detail in the relevant chapters.

3.2 The interviews

Ten people from each group were chosen to participate in follow-up interviews. They were chosen because their questionnaire preferences were representative of the majority of their group. The number of people to be interviewed each time was flexible. The interview was either conducted on a one-to-one base or in groups ranging from 2-4 people. Again, students were often interviewed in small groups because of easy organisation. Managers were often interviewed on a one-to-one base. These interviews were closely related to the content of the questionnaires, and were in fact, explanations of their specific choices found in the questionnaires, such as why they preferred a particular form to be used

as a salutation. All of the interviews were taped and analysed, and the views will be discussed in the relevant chapters.

The interview questions were composed of two sets, and focused on each questionnaire task. The first set focused on finding the reasons for the native speakers' preferences at various levels of the text. The second sought to find the different criteria used for judging the most and least successful letters.

However, for the second task, only the managers' views will be discussed in this study for reasons mentioned earlier on. The managers' views will also be integrated in the detailed analysis of individual letters in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

4 Methods of analysis

The analysis will focus on both sources of data. First of all, the twenty-letter corpus will be studied to highlight the general findings. Secondly, the questionnaire results and interviews will be analysed. Third, the most and least successful letters identified by the enterprise managers will be analysed. All three types of the analysis generally follow top-down processing as discussed in the last chapter.

The twenty-letter corpus will be analysed first, and the analysis includes the following steps: First of all, the communicative purposes of the genre concerned will be studied. In order to have a full understanding of these, relevant world schemata will be discussed in detail. As noted in the last chapter, these purposes can be used as an important key to study the relationships between various levels of the text.

Then moves and steps will be discussed. Two kinds of move will be studied. They are formulaic moves and content moves. The formulaic moves refer to the form of the letter, such as headings, salutations, greetings, and well-wishes. The content moves refer to the body of the letter, which contains the major content. The two kinds of moves will be studied in relation to the communicative purposes to see how they are used to realise these purposes. In addition, the movements of the moves and steps will be discussed, such as the sequence, the frequency, and other relevant phenomena.

Finally, the linguistic forms will be examined to see how they are related to the higher levels, such as steps and moves, and communicative purposes. In addition, the preferred choices for a certain move or step will also be discussed.

The questionnaire results and the native speakers' views will be analysed according to the top-down model. First of all, the respondents' views of the communicative purposes of each sales genre will be discussed. Then their preferences at lower levels, such as moves and steps, and linguistic forms, will be examined. In the analysis, emphasis will be placed on whether there is any relationship between their views on communicative purposes and their lower level preferences. If there is, the extent to which their understanding of these purposes influence or govern their choices at lower levels will be considered.

A detailed discussion will be provided of the most and least successful letters in each corpus, with the managers' view integrated into the analysis. The purpose here is twofold: to analyse individual letters, and to reflect the general expectation of the business writing discourse community about how to write a certain sales genre. The letters will be analysed according to the top-down model, and each of the lower levels such as moves, steps and linguistic forms will be discussed in detail in relation to the realisation of the communicative purposes of the letters. At the same time, the strong and weak points especially pointed out by the enterprise managers will be discussed. These points will also be studied in relation to the communicative purposes to find if the strong points can contribute greatly to the realisation of these purposes, and whether the weak points hinder their realisation.

Chapter 4. Genre analysis of Chinese sales letters

1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, a combined approach was proposed, mainly based on schema theory and Swales' (1990) genre study, although reference has also been made to Chinese sources such as rhetoric and composition writing. With this approach, genre will be analysed as a top-down process with communicative purposes as the central idea to tie together each level of a text. In other words, each level of the text such as text, moves, steps and relevant linguistic forms can be seen as contributing to the realisation of the overall communicative purposes of the genre.

This chapter aims to analyse the 'pingxing' genre of Chinese sales letters. As discussed in Chapter 1, sales letters comprise a new genre that has emerged after the economic opening-up in mainland China. A detailed discussion has already been given of the social context in relation to its emergence from a diachronic point of view. Therefore, this chapter will focus on analysing sales letters using the proposed approach. The concepts to be coordinated are world and formal schemata, and top-down processing from schema theory; communicative purposes and idea units such as moves and steps from Swales' genre theory and Chinese sources of rhetoric and composition writing. Communicative purposes are used as the key to the top-down analysis to show how the lower levels of the text are related to these purposes.

To accomplish the task of analysing this genre, the following steps are taken:

- (1) A brief introduction will be given to Chinese sales letters based on textbook advice.
- (2) The world schemata will be discussed and the communicative purposes of Chinese sales letters will be examined in detail.
- (3) A top-down analysis relating to moves, steps and linguistic forms will be given to the general structure of 20 sales letters in the corpus.
- (4) Business students' views on language use at each level of the text will be compared with those of enterprise managers. As discussed in Chapter 2, the students are still being trained to become part of the business discourse community, while the managers represent the business writing discourse community. Owing to the different experiences they have, the two groups are likely to have different knowledge structures and understandings of the

communicative purposes of this genre, which may lead to a divergence of preferences at lower levels of language choice. This point will be examined in detail in this chapter.

(5) The structure of the most and least successful letters identified by managers will be discussed.

2 Chinese sales letters: a textbook approach

As discussed in Chapter 1, Chinese sales letters are currently gaining increasing importance as the most common sales genre. They represent an initial step in business, and many business transactions start with sales letters. They are also employed as a useful tool to deal with the transaction of business at various stages. In order to illustrate what a sales letter is like, a brief discussion will be given with textbook advice as a reference. As discussed in Chapter 2, many business universities have their own textbooks, such as Chen (1991), Chen and Wang (1994), Li (1983), Li (1990), He and Lü (1991), and Gu (1995). In addition, there is also a textbook for foreign students (Zhao and Lü, 1994). Gu (1995) can be taken as representative of the general prescriptive principles of these textbooks. As noted in Chapter 2, according to Gu (1995:174), sales letters should have a ‘gongwen’ (official letter) form and be composed of a heading or key words indicating what the letter is about, a salutation, the body of the letter, and a signature. There is no need to include greetings or well-wishes. Thus the structure of the Chinese letter is:

Heading

Salutation: often the company name

The body of the letter: introducing the product and soliciting a response

Signature of the writer

These prescribed rules seem to emphasise the form of the letter. The body of the letter is not fully explored, and only two communicative purposes are mentioned, such as product introduction and soliciting a response. The following is an example of a sales letter taken from Chen (1991:262) (Both the Chinese original and the English translation are given).

推 销 毛 料

XXX纺织品批发中心,

根据贵方一月七日来函要求, 现寄上XXX牌毛料样品及表格一份。我们深信, 这将会使贵方惠然定货的!

近来, 国产进口原料大幅度上涨, 迫使我们不得不在价格上作了少许提高。我们估计, 二季度原料价格还会有明显上涨, 届时毛料价格也会上浮。因此, 我们提请贵方抓紧时机, 尽快成交, 我厂将提供现货。

望尽早回复。

XXX第二毛纺织厂

一九八八年一月十八日

Heading

The Promotion of Wool Cloth

Salutation

XXX Textile factory,

Body

In response to your letter dated January 7, we enclose a sample of XXX brand wool cloth and price catalogues. We trust that you (H) will be interested and want to place an order.

Recently the prices of both local and imported materials have been rising rapidly. We have to raise our price somewhat. We estimate that the prices will rise again in April, and this will mean the price of the wool cloth will rise also. Therefore, we would like to request you (kindly) to make a quick decision. We can supply you with stock on hand.

Hope to hear from you at your earliest convenience.

Signature
and date

XX Wool Cloth Co.
January 18, 1988

The above example, generally speaking, follows the described rules. As regards form, this letter has a heading, a salutation, the body of the letter and the signature. In content, the letter matches the advised purposes of promoting wool cloth and soliciting a response from the reader.

However, at least one more purpose can be found in the second paragraph, where the writer tries to persuade the reader to accept the offer in view of the potential price rise. This purpose is closely related to the perlocutionary force the writer intends to exercise on the reader. From this one can see that the prescribed rules are mainly related to illocutionary force, such as offering the product, but not to the perlocutionary such as persuading the

reader to accept the offer. As noted in Chapter 2, the perlocutionary force is not as explicit as the illocutionary force, and therefore, is more difficult to identify or study. The example thus raises the question of whether the prescribed rules of textbooks actually reflect the overall communicative purposes of sales letters and represent the current business writing practices. This question will be discussed below through an examination of the corpus of 20 letters. After that, a top-down analysis will be applied to the texts to find how these purposes are realised in each level of text.

3 Studying the communicative purposes of sales letters

As discussed in Chapter 2, communicative purposes are the most important factors in the present approach to genre study (Swales, 1990). This point has also been stressed in Chinese rhetoric such as in Liu Xie's work (Shi, 1959) and Chinese composition writing (Zhang, 1981; Zhang, 1983a; Yang, 1983). Well-defined world schemata and formal schemata are needed to guarantee a correct understanding and analysis of the text. World schemata are especially important for the identification of communicative purposes, although formal schemata are also required. Here, for ease of analysis, world schemata are mainly discussed as a prerequisite for identifying communicative purposes, and the formal schemata will be discussed later in the analysis. The world schemata are composed of the following three kinds of knowledge.

The first is marketing knowledge about how to promote products. This may share some similarities with the western marketing AIDA model used in promotion. AIDA stands for a series of mental activities: attracting attention, sustaining interest, stimulating the desire to buy the product and calling for an action. Following this approach, the salesperson will first try to catch the attention of a potential customer, then interest him/her in the advertised product, promote the desire to buy the product, and finally place an order (Bennett, 1995). According to Aurner (1958) and Bennett (1995), most English sales letters follow this approach. As Aurner (1958:279) points out, "The straightforward purpose of business promotion messages is to bring about the sales of products and services – in other words, to 'promote business'". A similar concept to AIDA can be found in Chen (1991: 260), who explains "sales letters have to arouse the buyer's interest, and stimulate his/her desire to buy the products". This shows that the AIDA may be a universal approach and can be used as an

efficient strategy in marketing. As noted in Chapter 1, although China is not a capitalist country, the use of marketing strategies appears to be associated with the introduction of the market economy as part of the economic structure. Related to AIDA is knowledge about market pull and technology push. According to Farrer (1988), market pull refers to demands from the market, while technology push refers to using technical innovations to promote products. The existence of technology push and market demand in China make AIDA a possible marketing strategy.

The second kind of knowledge refers to the reader-writer relationship. In the 20 letter corpus, this relationship is ‘pingxing’ (equal) status (see Chapter 1), which refers to the equal institutional distance, where the writer does not have any control over the reader’s business management. The relationship between the writer and the reader is usually seller and buyer, and buying a product is mainly based on reader demand.

The third kind of knowledge is related to cultural protocols. One aspect is related to the appropriate level of ‘tīmào’ (politeness and respect) towards the reader. In Chinese, politeness is often associated with respecting others. A similar idea is expressed in Gu (1990). This kind of knowledge can be related to the second type, and the writer has to decide on the appropriate level of politeness based on the writer-reader relationship. Since the writer wants the reader to buy the product, the writer will usually choose a rather high level of politeness and respect.

On the other hand, another aspect of Chinese cultural protocol can be understood in relation to relationship building. The writer wants to establish a friendship or personal link with the reader in addition to the seller-buyer relation. This new relationship will help the promotion of the product. As Nowak and Dong (1997) and Gilsdorf (1997) point out Chinese businessmen tend to promote their business through personal contacts (guānxì). Relationship building is a typical Chinese cultural value and can be explained in the light of collectivist culture (Hofstede 1980, 1991). Hofstede (1980, 1991) on the basis of ‘personality’ and ‘self-concept’, divides cultures into two kinds: collectivist and individualistic. According to Hofstede, (1980), individualistic cultures, such as the United States and Australia, value self-concept and ‘personality’ is considered as ‘a separate entity distinct from society and culture’. Collectivist cultures, such as Chinese and Japanese, do not value ‘personality’ and individuals are seen as related to the group or collective they belong

to. Harmony and relationship building are important concepts in these cultures. The difference between American individualism and Japanese collectivism is also discussed by Wierzbicka (1991) and Yamada (1992). Evidence of a Chinese tendency to disregard ‘personality’ can be found in Hsu (1971), who explains that the word ‘jen’⁶ (man) is often understood as the person himself/herself plus the social and cultural environment. Therefore, in writing Chinese sales letters, relationship building with the reader can be very important.

All the knowledge discussed above is an important component of world schemata and can be used to help identify the communicative purposes of sales letters. The most obvious purpose of a sales letter is to persuade the reader to buy the product, which involves a complex communicative process and thus needs to have additional purposes as well. If the above world schemata are appropriately used, one can, on close observation identify the following communicative purposes in the corpus:

- 1 To persuade the reader to buy the product
- 2 To achieve a positive public image
- 3 To build relationships with the reader
- 4 To attract the reader’s interest or attention
- 5 To give positive appraisals of the product
- 6 To solicit a positive response and encourage further communication

The above purposes can be seen as related to each other. All other purposes are subordinate to the first purpose, persuading the reader to buy the product. Achieving a positive public image is related to this purpose in that a positive image can help to persuade a reader. Building a relationship can smooth the way to persuade the reader. Attracting attention or interest is the initial step towards persuasion. Giving positive appraisals can provide convincing factors about the product quality in order to persuade the reader. Soliciting a response is the final stage once the reader has been persuaded.

As shown above, more communicative purposes are found in the corpus than the textbook advice suggests. The textbooks especially overlooked the purposes relating to perlocutionary forces, such as persuading the reader and achieving a positive image. The

⁶ This is an early pingyin form of the modern pinyin ‘rén’ (man).

reason for this could be that since textbooks mainly use a 'recipe' approach, it is easier to list tasks relating to illocutionary rather than perlocutionary forces. Therefore, it can be seen that the textbook advice cannot reflect all the communicative purposes of sales letters, and these purposes need further exploration.

With appropriate marketing knowledge, one can also see that some of the communicative purposes identified in the Chinese corpus roughly correspond to the AIDA model. The fourth purpose, attracting the reader's interest or attention, is related to 'attention' and 'interest'; the first and fifth purposes are related to 'desire'; and the sixth purpose is related to 'action'. This shows that AIDA is relevant to Chinese sales letters. It also indicates that since the economic reform, marketing strategies have started to be used in Chinese sales letters.

However, it seems that this is a specific Chinese way of using the AIDA model since other communicative purposes are involved. For example, the second purpose, 'achieving a positive public image', can be related to the Chinese cultural protocol relating to politeness and respect in sales letters.

The third purpose of relationship building is worth noting. As mentioned earlier, it is related to the values of a collectivist culture. In Chinese culture, it is important to build a personal relationship or have 'guānxì' (contacts) with the reader or addressee. This new relationship will help the promotion of the product.

Further evidence for the importance of Chinese being a collectivist culture can be found in the business context (Bilbow, 1995; Campbell, 1996; Günthner, 1993; Murray, 1994; Ulijn and Li, 1995; Whengzong and Grove, 1991). These studies note that harmony and politeness are very important Chinese concepts in cross-cultural or inter-cultural communication. For example, Campbell (1996) found that some Chinese business letters tend to include personal information at the beginning, and use it as a politeness strategy for relationship building with the reader. Some letters in the corpus also show this and this point will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. The importance of building relationships in a collective society will shed light on understanding some of the cultural norms in sales letters.

4 The top-down process of realising communicative purposes

In this section, the concept of top-down information processing is applied to study how the communicative purposes of sales letters are related to each lower level of the text and how each level contributes to their general realisation. Notice the word ‘general’ is used to indicate that there is no one-to-one relationship between the communicative purposes and the lower levels of the text, such as moves, steps and linguistic forms. As discussed in Chapter 2, top-down process is a common practice in Chinese composition writing, although the units of analysis may not be exactly the same as Swales’ (1990) moves or steps. The principle applied in this study is also content based with the aim of finding how communicative purposes are realised through lower levels of a text.

The communicative purposes of sales letters in the corpus are found to be realised mainly by the following structure. Some of the content moves are based on Bhatia’s (1993) analysis of English sales letters:

Level 1: The text which reflects the communicative purposes

Levels 2 and 3: Moves and steps

Formulaic moves:

- 1 Heading (rare)
- 2 Opening moves
 - salutation
 - greetings
- 4 Closing moves
 - Well-wishes
 - Signature and date

Content moves:

- 1 Introductory section
- 2 Establishing credentials
- 3 Introducing the product
 - Step 1 Offering product or service
 - Step 2 Essential detailing of the product
 - Step 3 Evaluating product
- 4 Offering incentives
 - Step 1 Offering a special price or a free gift
 - Step 2 Indicating the benefits the product may bring
- 5 Soliciting a response
 - Step 1 Making a request
 - Step 2 Using pressure tactics

The above moves and steps are reflected in a top-down process model in which the text level represents the highest level, and this is also the level that reflects the communicative purposes. As shown above, there are two kinds of moves: formulaic moves and content moves. They are thus named because the former moves are mainly related to the formulaic components of the letter while the latter moves are related to the body of the letter. In the Chinese sales letters, up to five types of formulaic moves were generally found. These are headings, salutations and greetings as opening moves, and well-wishes and signature and date as closing moves. There were also up to five types of content moves. They are an introductory section, establishing credentials, introducing the offer, offering incentives and soliciting a response. Each move can be seen as a further realisation of the communicative purposes of the genre. For example, a formulaic move and an introductory move can be related to establishing positive public image and relationship building. The move of establishing credentials can be related to achieving positive public image and attracting reader's attention. The move of introducing the product can be related to the purposes of giving positive appraisals and persuading the reader. The move of soliciting a response is related to the purpose of encouraging further communication.

However, the above description of the relationship between moves and communicative purposes is only a rough guideline and is not a complete list of all the possible relationships. In fact, there is no one-to-one correspondence between these two elements. As shown above, one move can be related to more than one purpose, and one purpose can be fulfilled by more than one move. In spite of this flexibility, there are some relatively stable relationships, such as in the moves of introducing the product, and soliciting a response. The content moves are more important as they are related more directly to the major purposes.

Steps are a lower level under 'moves'. As discussed in Chapter 2, a move can be seen as a step if it does not contain any further steps, such as the formulaic moves and the first two content moves. Some moves, such as introducing the product and soliciting a response, consist more than one step. Steps are closely related to moves, and are used to realise them, and also to realise the communicative purposes.

In addition, a further lower level of linguistic forms will be studied as another part of the formal schemata. However, only relevant linguistic forms will be studied as a means of

determining steps and moves, and achieving the communicative purposes. All these levels of text can be seen as specific applications of formal schemata, which will be analysed in detail below.

4.1 Analysing the formulaic moves

As noted above, there are five types of possible formulaic moves: headings, salutations, greetings, well-wishes, and signature and date. There are few salient sociolinguistic variables in terms of institutional distance, as the writer and reader are equal companies and are independent of each other’s control. However, the writer can use lexical items to encode linguistic distance, which can be manipulated by the writer as ritual access (Goffman, 1972). The lexical items used in formulaic moves will be studied in relation to communicative purposes. The specific formulaic components of the 20 letters are shown in Table 3, except for signature and date because they are used in all the letters:

Table 3. The usage of the formulaic components in the corpus

Letter No.	Heading	Salutation	Greeting	Well-wishes
letter 1	-	+	+	+
letter 2	-	-	-	+
letter 3	-	+	+	+
letter 4	-	+	-	+
letter 5	-	+	-	-
letter 6	-	+	-	+
letter 7	-	+	+	+
letter 8	-	+	+	+
letter 9	-	+	+	-
letter 10	-	+	-	-
letter 11	-	+	-	-
letter 12	-	+	-	-
letter 13	-	+	+	-
letter 14	-	+	-	+
letter 15	-	+	+	+
letter 16	+	+	-	-
letter 17	-	+	-	+
letter 18	-	+	+	+
letter 19	-	+	+	-
letter 20	-	+	+	+

As shown above, the prescribed formula discussed in textbooks only appears in part, in some sales letters. For example, Letters 5,10,11 and 12 only have salutations, and do not

have greetings or well-wishes. Of the twenty letters listed above, only one letter, Letter 16, is similar to Gu's (1995) prescription with a heading and no greetings or well-wishes. The other 19 letters all violate the prescribed rules in one way or another by having no heading, or by including greetings or well-wishes. It can be seen that most of the letters employed salutations, half employed greetings, the majority employed well-wishes, and only one letter employed a heading. This finding shows that the actual formulaic components of the sales letters do not conform very well to the textbook prescriptions. This may be because the prescribed rules may not be adequate for realising the communicative purposes. For example, these sales letters employed formulaic components often used in personal letters, such as greetings and well-wishes, which may be related to the purpose of creating a positive public image and relationship building. If headings were used, the letters would become more formal and this would possibly hinder establishing closer relationship with the reader. The signature and date are only used to close the letter. A signature is often replaced by stamp of the company as a formal way to represent the writer's company. The signature and date are placed at the end of the letter as a common practice of Chinese letter writing.

4.1.1 The linguistic forms used as salutations

The linguistic forms of salutations will be discussed here to indicate how the bottom level of formulaic moves can be related to the communicative purposes. The findings are shown in the following table.

Table 4. Usage of a breakdown of the address terms used as salutations

Letter No.	Salutation	Salutation (trans.)
letter 1	mǒumǒu jīnglǐ xiānshēng	Mr surname + title
letter 2	péngyǒumen	friends
letter 3	qīnàide yònghù	dear customer
letter 4	fùzé tóngzhi	person in charge
letter 5	nǚshìmen xiānshēngmen	ladies and gentlemen
letter 6	jīngqǐzhě	respected reader
letter 7	mǒumǒu jīnglǐ	surname + title
letter 8	mǒumǒu jīnglǐ	surname + title
letter 9	qīnàide yònghù	dear customer
letter 10	mǒumǒu gōngsī	Co. name
letter 11	jīngqǐzhě	respected reader
letter 12	mǒumǒu jīnglǐ	surname + title
letter 13	mǒumǒu jīnglǐ	surname + title
letter 14	fùzé tóngzhi	person in charge
letter 15	fùzé tóngzhi	person in charge
letter 16	mǒumǒu gōngsī	Co. name
letter 17	mǒumǒu jīnglǐ	surname + title
letter 18	fùzé tóngzhi	person in charge
letter 19	qīnàide yònghù	dear customer
letter 20	fùzé tóngzhi	person in charge

As shown in Table 4, there are eight address terms used in the corpus as salutations. They are: ‘mǒumǒu jīnglǐ xiānshēng’ (Mr surname + title), ‘péngyǒumen’ (friends), ‘qīnàide yònghù’ (dear customers), ‘fùzé tóngzhì’ (person in charge), ‘nǚshìmen xiānshēngmen’ (ladies and gentlemen), ‘mǒumǒu jīnglǐ’ (surname + title), ‘jīngqǐzhě’ (respected reader), and ‘mǒumǒu gōngsī’ (company names). The first seven sales letters all refer to persons, by a general name such as customer, or with specific names such as surname + title.

According to Table 4, ‘Mǒumǒu jīnglǐ’(surname + title) and ‘fùzé tóngzhì’ (person in charge) are the most popular address terms, each being used in five letters. These two address terms may have two connotations. First the writer shows respect for the reader by naming her/his title or responsibilities at work; second, because the letter is related to promotion, the writer wants to direct this letter to the reader who is responsible for sales matters.

‘Qīnàide yònghù’ (dear customer) and ‘nǚshìmen xiānshēngmen’ (ladies and gentlemen) are very fashionable address terms that have been used since the economic

opening up in recent years. ‘Qīnàide’ (dear) is a very westernised salutation. In Chinese culture, ‘dear’ is mainly reserved for lovers or very intimate friends. But nowadays, under western influence, more and more people are beginning to use this address term in public, both to show the speaker’s or writer’s friendly attitude, and reduce the linguistic social distance between the addresser and addressee. Three letters used ‘qīnàide yònghù’, which was the third most frequent address term, because it can show both respect and indicate the purpose of promotion by calling the reader ‘yònghù’ (customer). ‘Péngyǒu (friend) is a new address term used to replace the old-fashioned ‘tóngzhǐ’ (comrade) among males, and can be used in public as a friendly address term in conversation. Despite its friendliness, this address term is the least used (only once) in the corpus, probably because it is too informal and does not indicate the appropriate level of respect.

‘Jìngqǐzhě’ (respected reader) is a traditional and formal address term that was used in classical business letters. It is used only twice in the 20 sales letters. This address term is respectful as indicated in the word ‘jìng’ (respected) and may be good for achieving respect or politeness. However, it appears to be too formal in this context. ‘Company name’ is the only address term referring to the reader as a company. This address term has an impersonal tone, and is preferred in textbooks, but not in this corpus, perhaps because company names are not very appropriate for either politeness or relationship building.

Generally speaking, as shown in the above discussion, the specific uses of formulaic components are related to realising communicative purposes, with emphasis on relationship building, achieving a positive image, and product promotion. At the same time, they also reflect the forms used in ‘pingxing’ genre where people of equal social status can show politeness and respect through address terms.

4.1.2 The linguistic forms used for other formulaic moves

Greetings are very often expressed as:

nínhǎo!

you-well

How are you?

The above greeting is frequently used in everyday conversation or personal letters to indicate politeness. Other types of greeting are also found, such as:

- (1)

gōngzuò máng ma?

work busy QM

Are you busy with your work?
- (2)

běn gōngsī quánǐ zhīgōng xiàng nín zhìyǐ!

this company all staff-member to you (H) greetings

All the staff members of our company express our greetings to you!

The first example as shown above is a frequent colloquial greeting to a friend. The second example is in a rather formal register indicated by ‘zhìyǐ’ (greetings), and is often used in written language. Both of these greetings were found in the corpus to express greetings with slightly different registers.

Well-wishes often use the form of:

- (cǐ)zhǐ (jìng)lǐ

show respect

With best-wishes

These well-wishes are also frequently used in personal letters to indicate a polite closing. Other types are also found in the corpus. They include:

- (1)

zhēnzhǐ de zhùyuan!

sincere GNE wish

With sincere wishes!

- (2) zhù shǐyè fādá!
wish business flourish
May your business flourish!
- (3) yuàn hézuò chénggōng
wish cooperate success
Wishing every success for our cooperation!

As shown above, the first example is very similar to ‘cǐzhǐ jǐnglǐ’ (to show respects), but it emphasises the sincerity of the well-wishes. The second and third examples are wishes relating to business development. In the second example, ‘fādá’ is often considered to be a lucky expression especially for business people. In the third example, the writer expresses the wish to develop business with the reader.

In summary, both greetings and well-wishes are used to indicate politeness, and help establish a friendly relationship with the reader. They can be seen as examples of how formulaic components are used to achieve specific communicative purposes. This also shows how formal schemata are applied in the formulaic moves.

4.2 Analysing the content moves

Content moves are analysed here in the top-down manner. As noted earlier, five moves are found in the corpus. They are the introductory section, establishing credentials, introducing the product, offering incentives and soliciting a response. Among the twenty letters, only eight (40%) begin with the introductory section and the remaining twelve (60%) all begin with either establishing credentials or introducing the product. All the five moves will be discussed in detail below.

4.2.1 The introductory section

Move 1, the introductory section, can be seen as composed of one step. This does not directly relate to sales, but prepares the way for the following section(s). This section can be subordinate information for the whole letter, as seen in the following introductory section of one letter in the corpus:

wèi jǐnyībù wánměi de wèi nín fúwù, tè xiàng nín
in-order-to further perfect GNE for you (H) serve specially for you (H)
huǐbào Allbest diànrǎo gōngsī de gèzhǒng qíngkuàng, qǐng gěiyǔ dàlǐ
report Allbest electricity company GNE various thing please give full
zhīchí wéipàn
support as-wish

In order to offer you better services, (we) would like to report our company's
(Allbest Electricity Co.) sales to you. (We) hope that you will give us your full
support.

In this example, the introductory section has a subordinate and main structure. This is a common sentence structure often discussed in traditional Chinese grammar (Chao, 1968; Gao, 1986; Ma, 1981). The connective 'wèi(le)' (in order to) in the subordinate clause is supposed to introduce the purpose for the main clause, but it is often used to introduce a background objective. In this case, by saying 'jǐnyībù wánměi de wèi nín fúwù' (offering you better service), the writer shows cordiality or politeness to the reader, and points out the good-natured objective of serving the customers in the long run. 'Wèi(le)' indicates a formal register often used in written genres such as 'gongwen' (official letters). 'Wèi(le)' also has a further function of signalling that something important will happen in the main clause, which is 'xiàng nín huǐbào' (to report to you) in this case. We may notice an awareness of the reader in the way s/he is addressed respectfully in the form of 'huǐbào' (report). This form is often used when an inferior reports to a superior, and it is used here in 'pingxing' genre as means of achieving politeness and respect. 'Nín' (you) is written in the honorific form, which adds to the level of politeness.

4.2.2 Establishing credentials

Move 2, establishing credentials, is the first move in 55% of the 20 sales letters. By using this move, the writer establishes his/her expertise in a certain area. More than half (80%) of the letters in the corpus employ this move. It can be seen as composed of one step,

in which credentials function to attract and impress the reader. The Chinese sales letters that have credentials tend to include whatever advantages they may have to meet market demands or technology push. For example, a sales letter can include sales experience, the new technology the company uses, and even the goals of the company. Some of these are shown in the following example:

wǒmen Nanchang hǎixùn xúnhū zhōngxīn, zhèngshǐ shìyǐng zhè yī
we Nanchang ocean-flood search-call centre just-be meet this one
xíngshǐ, yóu shǐzhèngfǔ wúxiàngdiàn guǎnlǐ wěiyuánhùi hé Nanchang
situation PM municipal radio control committee and Nanchang
Haihua xīn jìshù gōngsī gòngtǒng chuàngjiàn de.

Haihua new technology company together establish GNE
In order to meet the needs of this situation, Nanchang Ocean Flood Communication
Centre was established jointly by Nanchang Radio Control Committee and
Nanchang Haihua New-tech Company.

As shown in the above example, this move is realised in a ‘(zhèng)shǐ + de’ (be + ‘de’ particle) structure, which is often used to stress a certain point of the sentence (Cheung et al., 1994:433). In this example, the goal of ‘shìyǐng zhè yī xíngshǐ’ (meeting the needs of the situation) is stressed. In this way, the writer’s company is also placed in a subject position. The use of this structure contributes to the realisation of attracting attention or interest from the reader. This move has to be indicated clearly to the reader and the style is usually direct. The reason for this may be that this move is related to making assertions or even boasting about the company’s credentials.

4.2.3 Introducing the product

Move 3, introducing the product, is the most essential part of the sales letter, and is found in all 20 letters in the corpus. The writer’s effort is directed to the appraisal of the product as being the best solution to the potential customer’s needs. Generally speaking, this move is placed after establishing credentials when the reader’s interest has been aroused. Fifteen letters (75%) developed directly from establishing credentials to introducing their

products. Three (15%) letters placed this move after the introductory move. Two letters (10%) placed introducing the product at the beginning.

To be specific, this move is composed of the following three steps:

Step 1 Offering the product or service

Step 2 Essential detailing of the product

Step 3 Evaluating the product

All the sales letters in the corpus have the above three steps, which all contribute to the realisation of giving positive appraisals and persuading the reader. The first step tells the reader what product is offered, the second step provides essential details, while the third gives a positive evaluation. The first step can be exemplified in the following two examples.

xiàn chényǐ xiàng guì gōngsī tuījiàn yī zhǒng jùbǐngxī (PP)

now sincere for your (H) company recommend one kind PP⁷

zhōngkōng jiāopiàn.

hollow rubber

Now (we) sincerely recommend to your (H) company a kind of PP hollow rubber.

In the above example, the offer of product is made using the verb ‘tuījiàn’ (recommend).

Verbs such as ‘tuījiàn’ (recommend) and ‘tígōng’ (offer) are frequently used in offering a product. In addition, the offer in the above example is introduced through a ‘we’ orientation in affirmatives, which is frequently used in Chinese sales letters.

Here ‘we’ orientation (Bhatia, 1993), or ‘we’ attitude (Aurner 1958), is found in contrast to ‘you’ orientation, both of which refer to different perspectives in talking to a reader. When the writer wants to announce something to the reader, s/he has the choice of either a ‘you’ or ‘we’ perspective to convey the propositional meaning. This does not only indicate a difference in the use of pronouns, but also reflects the different effects that the writer expects they can convey. Aurner (1958:65) explains ‘you-attitude’ in this way: “When you talk about your reader, you are discussing the most interesting thing in the world---to him. Make his interests, his wishes, his preferences, his hopes as nearly as possible yours”. He emphasises that the writer can win the reader’s willing and cordial fellowship if the writer

⁷ A kind of chemical synthesis.

can think and speak from the reader's point of view. He indicates a dichotomy between a 'you-attitude' and a 'we-attitude':

'you'	'we'
You may have noticed	We wish to announce
Your experience may have shown	It is our opinion
Have you perhaps wondered	We are firmly of the belief
You will often find	We think that

The two sentences in each line have similar propositional meanings. The left column is expressed as a 'you-attitude', while the right column is expressed as a 'we-attitude'. It is preferable in English business letters to express the ideas with a 'you' perspective in the left column. In western business practices, this is considered to be an important strategy for winning the reader (Aurner, 1958; Murphy at al., 1997).

In the 20 letter corpus, however, one letter (Letter 9) introduces the offer through a 'you' orientation or 'you' attitude. The offer is introduced in an interrogative:

nín xiǎng yòng yōuhuǐ de jiàgé mǎi yī tái gōngnéng zhuōyuè,
you (H) want with special GNE price buy one Class. function brilliant
pǐnzhǐ yōuliáng, wàiguān jīngměi de hòubèi 500VA de UPS ma?
quality good look exquisite GNE reserve 500VA GNE UPS QM
Do you want to buy a reserve UPS with brilliant function, good quality, and
exquisite appearance at the lowest possible price?

'Nín' (H you) addresses the reader with respect. The use of the 'you' orientation may show a western influence, because no Chinese textbooks so far as I know use such an approach. In contrast, some Chinese guide books for writing English business letters (Wang and Wang, 1993; Zhuang and Zhou, 1988) use this approach. Since Chinese sales letters are a new genre in a transitional period and a lot of Chinese companies are doing business with foreign companies, it is possible that Chinese sales letters have absorbed this western influence. This may also be evidence to show that the absorption of a form may enrich the formal schemata

for writing sales letters. The learner or analyst can reinforce formal schemata by learning new forms from texts. This can also be related to genre development as a dynamic process of absorbing new forms.

The second step is the essential detailing of the product, which is often placed after offering the product. The details have to be both informative and convincing. If too little information is provided, the reader will not have a full understanding of the products; if too much information is provided, the reader could lose interest in reading the letter. Therefore, world schema has to be applied to decide what is essential and what is non-essential. What is essential can be related again to technology push and market demand. High-tech innovations used for a product can indicate that it is of consistently high quality, and reference to market need can also be made to indicate how the product can meet such needs. For example, one letter from a gift company introduces essential details in the following forms:

lǐpǐn pǐnzhǒng huāyàng fánduō, huījī le gǎng, rǐ, tái děng
gift variety style many gather ASP Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan etc.
dì jí guónèi xīncháo lǐpǐn, pǐnzhǒng gòng yǒu wǔjīn zhǐpǐn,
place and nation-inside new-trend gift variety in-all have five-metal product
pígé zhǐpǐn, suòliào zhǐpǐn, jiāyòng diànrǐ, gōngyìpǐn,
leather product plastic product home-use electricity-appliance handicraft-article
rìyòngpǐn děng yīqiān duō gè pǐnzhǒng.
daily-use-product etc. one-thousand more Class. variety
(Our) giftware has a lot of varieties and styles, including new fashion products from
Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, etc. There are altogether more than one thousand
varieties, such as hardware products, leather products, plastic products, household
appliances, handicraft articles and daily use products.

The above details are introduced by a topic-comment sentence in which ‘lǐpǐn’ (giftware) is the topic and ‘pǐnzhǒng huāyàng fánduō’ (have a lot of varieties and styles) is the comment. According to Chao (1968) and Li and Thompson (1976, 1981), topic-comment structure is one of the important features of Chinese language. As shown in the above

example, this structure is also used in sales letters. The details focus on the new products by mentioning varieties and styles, and new fashions, all of which meet the market need for choice and style. High-tech is also hinted at by mentioning Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan, because Chinese people generally trust products including giftware from these places as being of high quality and made using advanced technology.

The third step, evaluating the product, is related to giving positive appraisals to the product. It is realised in the use of a number of linguistic forms, such as NPs, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, and ‘sǐzi jiēgòu’ (four-character expressions), etc. Teh’s (1986) ‘lexical boost’ can be used to describe all of these kinds of expressions. According to Teh, lexical boost refers to the adjective, adverbs or verbs the writer uses to positively evaluate products, and to lexis relating to negative values the writer uses to point out a need for a product. It is a very common practice in English sales letters. In this discussion, I will limit my use of lexical boost to lexical items relating to positive evaluation, because negative evaluation does not seem relevant to the discussion of the step of evaluating the product.

Common forms of lexical boost in Chinese sales letters include adjectives, and superlatives. For example:

gāi jiàochē zuǐ shǐhé yú jiātǐng, yě shì chūzū gōngsī de
this car most suitable for family also is taxi company GNE
lǐxiǎng yòng chē.
ideal use car

This car is most suitable for families and also ideal as a taxi.

One superlative degree ‘zuǐ shǐhé yú’ (most suitable) and one adjective ‘lǐxiǎng’ (ideal) underlined above are used as lexical boost coordinated by the connective ‘yě’ (also). The lexical boost helps to evaluate the product.

Under the category of lexical boost, another form used in this step in the corpus can be explained by referring to Martin’s (1992) adjectives of intensified degrees. According to Martin (1992), the meaning of adjectives can be intensified in respect of qualities such as size, shape, etc. These degrees are associated with the attitudes of the addresser who wants to achieve a positive or negative effect when making a comment or evaluation. Martin

further divides intensity of adjectives into three degrees, having high, median and low values. This point can be indicated by the following example quoted from Martin (1992:372):

an absolute idiot	high
quite an idiot	median
a bit of an idiot	low

The three noun modifiers, ‘absolute’, ‘quite’, and ‘a bit’, are used to evaluate the noun ‘idiot’ with three different degrees of intensity. By using such intensified degrees, the addresser can exploit a range of words to convey his/her attitude. In a similar way, adjectives of intensified degree can be used to evaluate the product in Chinese sales letters. While we are not going to classify the specific degrees used in the corpus, the linguistic phenomenon and effect of the use of adjectives of an intensified degree should be noted.

For example, one letter uses the adjective of an intensified degree in the following excerpt:

wǒ gōngsī shēngchǎn de jiàochē zài zhōngyuán dìqū xiǎngyǒu shèngyù.
I company product GNE car in central-plain area enjoy grand-name
The cars produced by our company enjoy a grand reputation in the central area of China.

In the above example, the writer uses the character ‘shèng’ (grand) to indicate the meaning of ‘dà’ (big) or ‘hǎo’ (good). However, when ‘sheng’ is used, the effect is different from either of the other two terms in that ‘sheng’ has an intensified degree.

In addition to the above, Chinese sales letters have their own language-specific form of lexical boost – ‘sìzì jiēgòu’ (four-character expressions). They are thus called because they are composed of four Chinese characters. The form of ‘sìzì jiēgòu’ has developed from classical Chinese poetry (Zhu, 1990: 5), and even today many ‘sìzì jiēgòu’ retain the influence of classical Chinese. Here it needs to be pointed out that ‘sìzì jiēgòu’ are widely used in Chinese language and their use is not limited to evaluating products. Its popularity in

Chinese lies in its parallel structure, density of meaning, and musical rhythm (Guo, 1979, Vol. 2:658). This form can be used as lexical boost to give positive evaluations to a product. In the corpus of sales letters, one thus uses ‘sǐzǐ jiēgòu’:

chǎnpǐng xiāoshòu gèdì, quánqiú zhīmíng. qí zhìliàng yōuxiù
product sell everywhere world famous it quality excellent
dàilǐng kējì cháoliú, dúbù shìjiè.
lead science-technology trend walk-alone world
(Our) products sell everywhere. (They are) world-famous. (They are) of excellent
quality, lead the trend in science and technology and have a unique position in the
world.

In the above example, five four-character expressions (underlined) are used to describe the what the subject ‘chǎnpǐng’ (the product) is like. The subject of the first sentence is coreferenced with that of the second sentence ‘qí’ (it). All the five ‘sǐzǐ jiēgòu’ (four-character expressions) are specific positive evaluations made of the product. When people are promoting products, it is acceptable to praise or overestimate what is being promoted. Among the twenty letters, all used ‘sǐzǐ jiēgòu’ (four-character expressions) or other kinds of lexical boost to give positive appraisals to the products. Han (1991) found the use of four-character expressions in Chinese newspaper advertising too to indicate an elegant style.

The above three steps aim to give an all-round introduction of the product from a very positive perspective. All of them are used to achieve the communicative purpose of giving positive appraisals and persuading the reader to buy the product.

4.2.4 Offering incentives

Move 4, offering incentives, seems to be optional, and eleven letters (55%) employ it. Incentives are used to persuade the reader emotionally rather than by reasoning, and the move is related to offering service or benefits for the reader. This move can be seen as composed of the following two steps:

Step 1 Offering a special price, free gift and other services

Step 2 Indicating the benefits the product may bring

These two steps can co-occur. In fact, two letters use both. The first step is often related to giving a general offer of a special price. By ‘general’, I mean actual prices are not very often given, unless it is a special offer as in Letter 9 (to be discussed in 6.1 of this chapter). Bhatia (1993) found that a specific special price is often used as an incentive in English sales letters. However, this is not always true in Chinese sales letters. Price is often introduced in relation to good quality, balancing the two elements, such as in the form of four-character expression:

wùnměi jiàlián
product-good price-cheap
good quality and low price

The above expression is a common incentive used not only in sales letters but in advertisements in general. For example, Han (1991) also discusses this form in Chinese newspaper advertising. Alternatively the price can be introduced as:

jiàgé yōuhuì
price special
The price is special.

This expression only mentions that the price is special (yōuhuì), and does not indicate the specific amount of money a customer can save. The tendency to avoid detailed prices can be explained this way: in Chinese culture, a low price is often associated with bad quality. There is a common saying: ‘piányi méi hǎo huò’ or ‘cheap goods indicate bad quality’. If the product is very cheap, customers tend to doubt its quality. Unless the writer chooses to promote the product as a special offer, s/he would not usually indicate how cheap the product is.

In addition to price, Chinese sales letters may include free gifts or services such as transportation as incentives. Take the following as an example:

běn gōngsī dài bàn yùnshū, rèchén fúwù.
this company do transportation, warmhearted serve
Our company will provide transportation, and serve (you) warmheartedly.

Here transportation is offered as an incentive in the phrase ‘dài bàn yùnshū’ (provide transportation) because transportation presents serious problems in mainland China, and there is often a delay in delivery because of shortage of transport. It also offers good service in general by saying ‘rèchén fúwù’ (serve you warmheartedly). Both of these expressions are quite common in this context.

The second step, pointing out the future benefits of the product, can be seen in the following example:

gāi chǎnpǐn néng wèi nín chuàngzào gèng hǎo de jīngjǐ xiàoyì.
This product can for you (H) create better GNE economic benefit
This product will bring you better economic profits.

The above example points out a future benefit the product will bring to the reader. In other words, the writer tells the reader that if you buy this product, you will get ‘economic benefits’. In a business context, ‘jīngjǐ xiàoyì’ (economic profits) are often an important factor. This can therefore be seen as an incentive to the reader to buy the product.

4.2.5 Soliciting a response

Move 4, soliciting a response, is composed of the following two steps:

- Step 1 Making a request
- Step 2 Using pressure tactics

The above sequence sometimes can be reversed. It is also possible that both can be repeated. This phenomenon will be discussed further in the best and worst letters in this chapter. Both of the above two steps are closely related. The first step is a call for action, while the second step is to make a push for an action.

Soliciting a response is widely employed in the corpus. In fact all the twenty letters have this move. The reason for this lies in the ultimate purpose of the sales letter, which is to call for a positive response and encourage further communication.

The first step, making a request, is a directive speech act, and the writer makes an attempt to cause a response from the reader, thus indicating an imposition. In order to lighten this imposition, the twenty letters use two different linguistic forms. Nine of them (45%) use a conditional clause plus an imperative sentence. For example:

ruó méng chuíxún, qǐng cì diàn.
if meet inquire (H) please favour phone-call
If we have the honour of having your kind inquiry, please favour us with a
phone call.

In this example, the softener ‘qǐng’ (please) is used to indicate politeness. The sentence develops from the conditional or subordinate clause to the main clause of the request. The imposition of the request in the imperative is reduced by the conditional sentence, and it is only applicable under the condition expressed in the subordinate clause. This structure can also be explained in the light of negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Brown and Levinson (1987:62) define face as the public image every member of a certain community wants to claim. They further divide face into ‘negative face’ and ‘positive face’. ‘Negative face’ refers to the fact that one wants to claim freedom from imposition; and ‘positive face’ refers to the fact that one wants to be appreciated and approved by others (Brown and Levinson, 1987:61). Many actions we perform with words are potential face-threatening acts, such as requests and orders. The addresser is thus often confronted with negative face and has to address it by applying cost-benefit principles (Leech, 1983) with an effort to benefit the addressee. The conditional clause in the above sentence can be seen as a politeness strategy to give the reader options, and thus save the reader’s negative face. This sentence indicates that there is no obligation to ring us, and only those who are interested can give us a phone call.

In addition, some of the ‘shangxing’ (the subordinate writing to the superior) honorific forms such as ‘chuíxún’, and ‘cì’ are used here to show respect in this ‘pingxing’ request.

‘Chuǐ’ literally means ‘to lower oneself. In this context, it means the superior has to lower himself/herself to speak to the addressee, thus indicating a very respectful tone. ‘Cì’ (grant or bestow) is often used in ‘shangxing’ to indicate the granting of gift or award by a superior. This use is another strategy to maximise the reader’s benefit. In a collectivist culture, it is very important to know one’s position in a group and it is also quite common to raise the addressee’s position as a means of showing respect. These honorific forms are borrowed from the ‘shangxing’ genre to achieve this purpose. Respect is shown to the reader by writer’s placing himself/herself in a lower position. In this way, the linguistic forms used to express the request convey a high level respect to the reader. This also shows that forms can be manipulated to indicate linguistic distance. Although this cross-genre borrowing is a common way of conveying high respect, not all ‘shangxing’ lexis can be used in this way, especially those related to respect to elder generations.

Eleven letters (55%) express the request by using verbs such as ‘wàng’ (hope) and ‘huānyíng’ (welcome). For example:

- (1) wàng fùyīn
hope respond
(I) hope that you will respond.

- (2) huānyíng guānglín wǒ chǎng qiàntán yèwù.
welcome present (H) I company talk business
(We) welcome (you) to our company to talk about business

In the above two examples, the request is expressed through the attitudes of the writer. The first example expresses the writer’s wish using ‘wàng’ (hope), and the second expresses the writer’s friendly attitude by using ‘huānyíng’ (welcome). These requests are therefore considered to be polite in Chinese, because they do not impose. In spite of that they may sound direct in English. Kirkpatrick (1991, 1993) also found that ‘wàng’ (hope) was frequently used in Chinese request letters.

The second step, using pressure tactics, is a subordinate step to the request and has the effect of pushing the reader to make a quick decision. It is found in only three letters (15%). Pressure tactics often involve deadlines. For example, one letter writes:

rú huǐkuǎn zài 5 yuè 30 rì qián jǐdào, jiān xiǎngshòu yōuhuǐ jiàgé.
if payment in May 30 date before arrive-by-mail will enjoy special price
This special offer is valid if payments are received by May 30.

In the above example, the writer sets a deadline for the offer, which is May 30. Within this deadline, the reader can have ‘yōuhuǐ jiàgé’ (special price). These tactics mainly appeal to the emotions and are used to push or urge the reader to make a quick decision. However, they may be more effective with a reader who is already interested or half-inclined to buy, but may not be so persuasive if the reader is not interested. This step is repeated in the most successful letter, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

4.2.6 Summary of the content moves

The above examination of moves, steps and linguistic forms can be seen as a specific application of the formal schemata of the business writings discourse community. However, these forms only represent general tendencies or choices of language use in writing sales letters found in the twenty-letter corpus.


It can be seen that some moves appear to be optional and some obligatory. In speaking of ‘obligatory’ moves, Hasan’s (1985) generic structure potential (GSP) can be used as a reference. As discussed in Chapter 2, Hasan (1985) discusses GSP elements as obligatory to determine genres. This thesis will also look at these obligatory elements as important factors to determine genres. The reason is that these elements are closely related to realising the major communicative purposes of this genre. However, the obligatory elements in this thesis may not be the same as Hasan’s (1985), because they are mainly based on moves and steps.

Moves such as introducing the product and soliciting a response are obligatory as they appear in all the letters of the corpus. They basically represent the major communicative events, such as telling the reader about the product and requesting the reader to respond.

Therefore, they are the typical moves which can be used to characterise the genre of sales letters. Other moves, such as the introductory section, establishing credentials, and offering incentives are optional and only occur in some letters of the corpus. However, the lower use of optional moves does not necessarily mean that the writer is at liberty to exclude them from a sales letter. On the contrary, they are subordinate moves and sometimes can be important factors to influence the reader's decision. For example, establishing credentials can be quite important when the reader is considering the writer's expertise.

In a similar way, some steps appear to be obligatory, while others appear to be optional. For example, the step of using pressure tactics seem to be optional, and only some letters employ it. In contrast, steps such as offering the product, giving essential details and evaluating the product are employed by all the letters, because they are the important components to accomplish the move of introducing the product.

Generally speaking, although the order of the content moves does not follow a fixed sequence, there seem to be some rules. The letters start with or move towards promoting the product and end with calling for action from the reader. All of the eight letters (40%) that have introductory sections begin with this move. As discussed earlier, the introductory move is a typical beginning to establish a relationship with the reader. More than half of the sales letters (60%) tend to start straight with the major moves. Among them, eleven letters begin with establishing credentials, and one begins with introducing the product. There seems to be some flexibility in the position of these two moves. Calling for action is invariably placed at the end of the letter, after the introduction and persuasion have taken place. The sales letters tend to follow the following sequence:

- 
- (1) Introductory section
 - (2) Establishing credentials
 - (3) Introducing the product
 - (4) Offering incentives
 - (5) Soliciting a response

The above is only the general tendency. Sometimes moves in a sales letter can also follow a slightly different sequence. Especially Move 2 and Move 3 have rather flexible positions, and

they can also appear at the beginning of the letter. The last two moves are more fixed and are typically placed at the end of the letter. This sequence indicates the natural process of selling a product in the AIDA model. Since attracting the reader's attention and interest can be expressed in more than one move, the letter can therefore start with different moves. Encouraging the desire to buy the product seems to be in a rather late stage, when the reader has been convinced, and therefore the introduction of the product usually appears after the reader's interest has been aroused. It is, however, possible for it to appear earlier, as in Letter 9 which will be discussed later. Action is always placed at the end in the AIDA model as the realisation of the letter's ultimate purpose. This sequence can be taken as a component of the formal schemata relating to the rhetorical structure of Chinese sales letters. The structure in most sales letters follows a rather direct style and focuses on elaboration of the major communicative purposes (cf. Zhu, 1997a).

5 Questionnaire results and interviews relating to top-down processing

In order to provide validity for the above analysis, which has emphasised the importance of the application of both world and formal schemata and a full understanding of communicative purposes, it is important to include the views and understandings of users in the analysis. As noted in this chapter, there is a gap between textbook advice and business practice. This section will therefore examine whether there is a gap between the views of the managers and business writing students as experts of the discourse community and the trainees preparing to enter this discourse community. If there is such a gap, is it related to the respondents' different understandings of communicative purposes? Will this gap affect their views about elements at the lower levels of text?

The questionnaire and interviews focus on various levels of the text in an attempt to answer the above questions. First, the highest level of the text, ie. communicative purposes, will be examined to find whether the two groups have different understandings of them. Second, the formulaic moves will be studied in a top-down manner from moves and steps down to the linguistic forms. Only salutations are discussed as an example to indicate the use and understanding of linguistic forms.

5.1 Questionnaire results and interviews on communicative purposes

Only the major communicative purposes were examined in the questionnaire (see Appendix 2). They are: establishing a public image, attracting interest, and persuasiveness. These are also the purposes that may be in conflict with each other. In the questionnaire, both groups were asked to grade these three purposes as 1 (very important), 2 (quite important), 3 (not so important), and 4 (not important). The results of each group are shown in both Figure 4 and Figure 5 below:

Figure 4. The students' preferences (%)

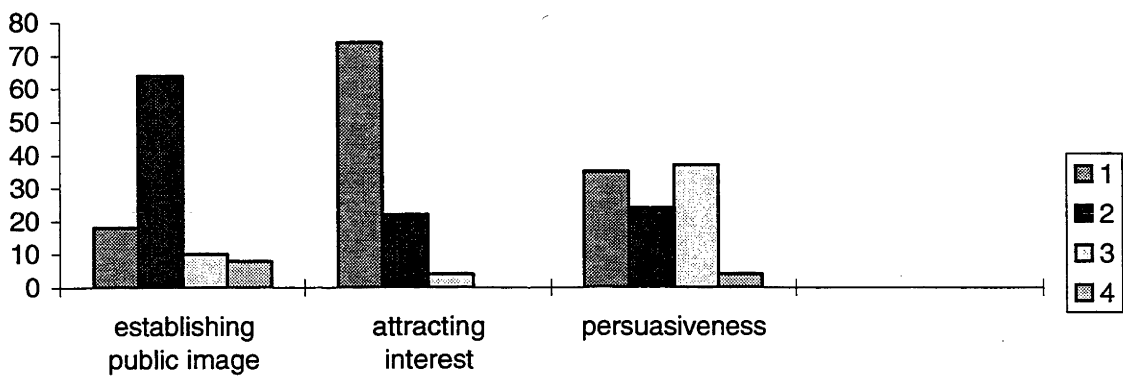
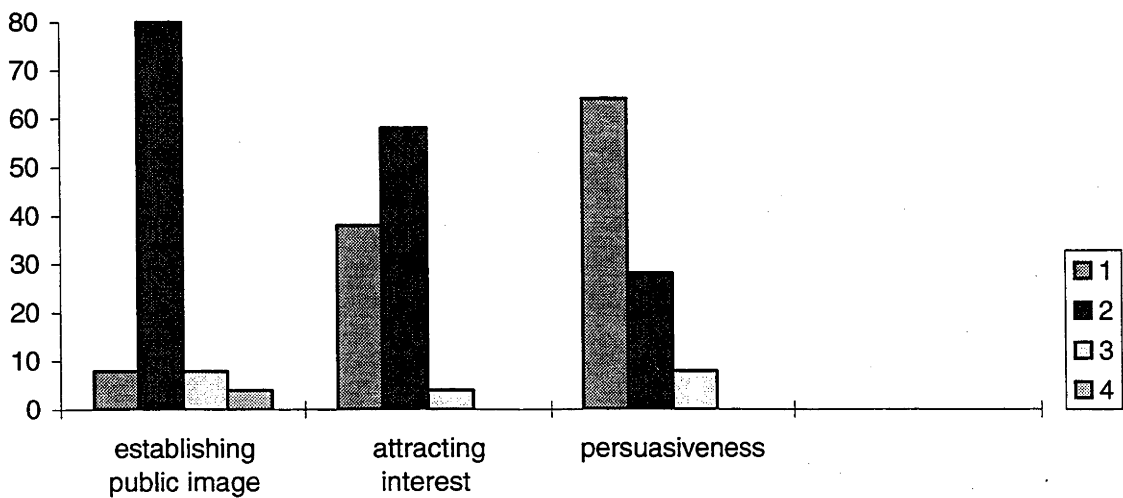


Figure 5. The managers' preferences (%)



NOTE: In the above two figures, the columns numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 stand for the four grades of ascribed importance. The vertical axis shows the percentage of each group who chose each grade for the three communicative purposes.

Figure 4 and Figure 5 show that the students and managers shared similarities in grading 'establishing public image', 64% of students and 80% of managers giving it a grade of 2 (quite important). But they differed in their grading of 'attracting interest' and 'persuasiveness'. Compared with the managers, more students preferred a high degree of 'attracting attention': 74%:22%; while more students preferred a lower degree of 'persuasiveness': 37%:8%.

Follow-up interviews were conducted and the results are discussed as follows. Although both students and managers shared some similarities in grading establishing a positive public image, these two groups have significantly different understandings of the other two purposes and in balancing the relationship among these purposes.

The students seemed only to understand cultural protocol when they graded 'establishing a public image' as an individual purpose. 64% of the students thought it was quite important. One student from this group thought that it could influence the reader's decision to buy the product. However, in talking about the relationships among the three main purposes, the students with this point of view thought that there was no need to grade it as very important, and the writer's effort should be directed towards 'attracting the reader's interest'. The students seemed to take this as the major purpose. Most (74%) of the students thought that it was very important for the reader to be interested in the product before everything else. They said that they did not mind sacrificing 'persuasiveness' for 'attracting interest'. Therefore, slightly more than a third of students (35%) ranked 'persuasiveness' highest, and more students (37%) thought that this aspect was not so important. Although the students have different opinions on 'persuasiveness', they generally agreed that the writer should not expect too much from the reader. To make the reader interested was enough in a sales letter. Although the students were familiar with the cultural protocol such as the appropriate level of a public image, they do not seem to have the overall world schemata to balance the relationships among these purposes.

The managers, in contrast, seemed to have a fuller understanding of the communicative purposes and thus could balance the relationships among them. They thought that in product promotion, 'establishing a public image' could be seen only as a subordinate purpose, while the major purpose was to persuade the reader to buy the product. 'Attracting

interest' could be seen as an initial-step to help realise 'persuasiveness'. Most of the managers (80%) thought that 'establishing a public image' was important in that it could help promote the product in the long term. In addition, they could use their knowledge of such promotion to point out a conflict, as when one manager said, "There was no need to be too much concerned with the public image. For example, a writer should not try to be very polite or respectful in order to achieve this purpose. If you were, the reader might think that you were lowering yourself and begging the reader to buy the product". Some managers argued that readers might even be suspicious that the quality of the product might not be very good, or that the writer was mainly concerned with a positive public image only to practise a hard-sell policy. In this respect, assigning too much importance to public image could weaken persuasiveness. On the other hand, if the writer failed to establish a public image, such as a polite image, the reader might be offended and thus would not finish reading the letter. As one manager commented, "Establishing a positive public image can be related to polite behaviour. Even if the reader does not buy the product, it will help promotion in the long run."

Here the managers' views bring to light the conflict between 'establishing public image' and 'persuasiveness'. Solving this conflict involves balancing the two purposes and determining the appropriate degree for each. However, no solution regarding this can be found in textbooks, because they do not discuss potential conflict in communicative purposes. In reality, this is a very common problem. A writer will constantly face this kind of conflict and need to balance the degrees of various purposes.

More than half (58%) of the managers ranked 'attracting interest' as grade 2, and thought that it was not as important as 'persuasiveness', which more than half (64%) ranked the highest. They thought that the writer should try to convince the reader with facts about the quality of the product. They expressed the opinion that they did not like unsupported advertising language to be used in sales letters. One manager said whenever you declared that the product was good, you should have evidence to substantiate this.

An interesting question is why so many students favoured 'attracting interest' at the expense of 'persuasiveness'. The explanation may lie in the recipe approach they have picked up from textbooks and their lack of knowledge about the communicative purposes. The textbooks, instead of presenting a clear description of the major purposes of sales

letters, only list the tasks the writer has to accomplish. The students who are the learners of these rules seem never to query them, but simply accept them. The managers, on the other hand, seem to understand the communicative purposes better. They would not sacrifice ‘persuasiveness’ for ‘attracting interest’. They said, “If you say something that is not true, the readers will find out very soon when they buy your products, and stop cooperating with you. You will not only lose your customers but also your name in business circles.” From this, we can see the relationship between well-defined world schemata and understanding of the communicative purposes as indicated in the managers’ views.

5.2 The usage of formulaic components

This section will focus on discussing questionnaire results and interviews on the lower levels of text of moves, steps and linguistic forms. The purpose is to find whether the gap in the native speakers’ understanding of communicative purposes will lead to different views on these lower levels. However, this section does not intend to provide a complete account of possible differences; instead, only formulaic moves will be discussed as an example.

The first questionnaire item focuses on the native speakers’ preferences for headings, salutations, greetings and well-wishes. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Native speakers’ preferences for formulaic components

	Heading		Salutation		Greeting		Well-wishes	
Responses	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Students %	76	24	100	0	28	72	80	20
Managers %	5	95	100	0	72	28	82	18

Note: Yes = Positive attitude; No = Negative attitude.

As shown in Table 5, there are some revealing similarities and differences among the two groups. They shared great similarities in terms of salutations and well-wishes: 100% of people in both groups preferred the employment of a salutation, and about 80% of both groups agreed on the use of well-wishes. This, interestingly, indicates a violation of the textbook prescriptions about the use of well-wishes. The two groups mainly differed in the

use of headings and greetings in sales letters. 76% of the students approved of the use of headings, while 24% disapproved. The opposite was true of the managers, as 5% approved of the use of the heading, while 95% disapproved. There was also a significant difference in the response to greetings. 72% of the managers encouraged the use of greetings, while 28% discouraged the use of them. The opposite was true with the student group, most of whom discouraged their use.

Since both groups agreed upon the use of salutations and well-wishes as necessary formulaic components for letter writing, the interviews focused on the use of headings and greetings. The students seemed to rely on textbook advice. Most (76%) of them insisted on the use of the heading. They thought it was important, because it acted as a title indicating what the letter was about. Most of the students (72%) disapproved of the use of greetings. They thought that the writer should talk about the product directly and not bother with greetings. Here perhaps the textbook influence discouraging the use of greetings comes into play.

In contrast, the managers seemed to relate these two elements to the realisation of communicative purposes. 95% of the managers, the vast majority, did not see the need for headings and thought that headings were too formal, and therefore might affect the degree of politeness and respect. They preferred a more personal letter form in which the writer could establish a personal relationship with the reader.

In addition, most of the managers (72%) insisted that greetings should be used as a means to shorten the social distance and achieve politeness. As one general manager commented, the use of greetings was important in that it could help build a personal relationship with the reader in addition to the actual buyer and seller relationship.

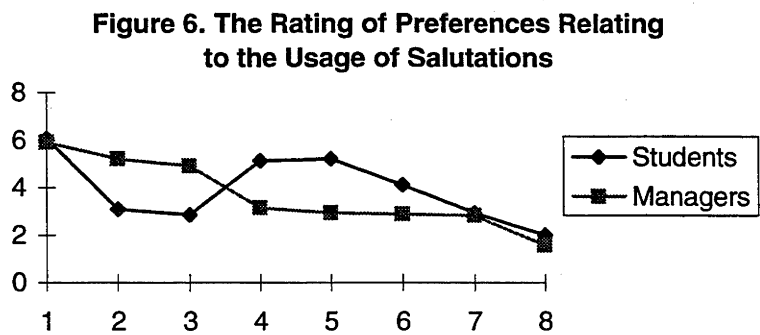
5.3 The preferred use of linguistic forms for salutations

This section examines views on the appropriateness of salutations as a typical example of using linguistic forms. The native speakers in each group were asked to rank (from 1-8) the salutations found in the corpus (see Table 4). The highest score shows the most appropriate, the lowest the least appropriate. The results of the mean score of each salutation are shown in Table 6:

Table 6. The results of rating (mean score) relating to the preferences of salutations

Salutation	Students	Rank	Managers	Rank
1 dear customers ⁸	6.08	1	5.9	1
2 person in charge	3.1	5	5.2	2
3 surname + title	2.85	7	4.9	3
4 ladies and gentlemen	5.13	3	3.5	4
5 company name	5.22	2	2.92	5
6 friends	4.1	4	2.87	6
7 respected readers	2.92	6	2.82	7
8 Mr. surname + title	1.98	8	1.56	8

The results of the above rating can be shown in the following figure to indicate more clearly the difference between the two groups:



Note: The vertical bar indicates the rank, while the horizontal bar indicates the forms.

The above table and figure show that ‘dear customers’ was the form most preferred by both groups, and the least preferred were ‘respected reader’ and ‘Mr surname + title’. They differed in the grading of the other five address terms. For example, the students rated ‘company name’ at 5.22, while the managers rated it at 2.92.

⁸ For ease of table formatting, only the translated version of these forms are used here. Equivalent Chinese versions of them are provided in 4.1.1 of this chapter.

In the follow-up interviews, the managers again could relate the use of address terms to the communicative purposes, while the students seemed to either follow textbook advice or could not relate the address terms to the communicative purposes.

People from both groups agreed that writers of sales letters should adopt 'dear customers' as a salutation, because they thought that this address term could best reveal the relationship between the writer as seller and the reader as customer. The reason for the agreement between the two groups can be that this address term is clearly related to sales. 'Respected reader' and 'Mr surname + title' were given low ranking by both groups, because 'respected reader' was too formal or respectful and 'Mr surname + title' redundant and too polite by referring to the reader as 'Mr' plus the title. In fact, either 'surname + title' or 'Mr + surname' would show enough respect and politeness. Therefore, the preferred usage was either 'surname + title' or 'Mr + surname', but not the combination of the three items. Here both groups shared similar views in terms of achieving politeness and respect.

The two groups differed in the use of the other five address terms and their views showed their different knowledge structures. The students favoured the use of 'ladies and gentlemen', 'company name' and 'friends'. They thought that it was fashionable to address the reader as 'ladies and gentlemen', as it was becoming more and more embraced as a public address term. 'Company name' was also rated favourably by the students. They explained that textbooks often used this address term for sales letters written between two companies. 'Friends' was thought by the students as a very friendly address term. The students thus seemed to rely on textbook advice if they could, or not relate their choices to the purposes of sales letters.

In sharp contrast, the managers could use their knowledge of promotion to decide on the use of the linguistic forms in relation to the communicative purposes. They rated highest what the students ranked rather low, and preferred to use 'person in charge' and 'surname + title', because both show respect by mentioning the reader's title or responsibility, and relate these choices to the purpose of promoting a product, as they knew that the two forms were frequently used in sales letters. They thought the letter would reach the person handling the purchasing directly by using either of these two address terms. If the letter adopted a more general address term, such as 'dear customers' or 'ladies and gentlemen', or 'friends', it might be passed around for a while before it was directed to the right person. At this point,

there is some difference between what the managers thought should be chosen, and what they actually chose. In Table 6, the managers rated 'dear customers' the highest, but in interviews, none of them said that they ever actually employed this. They explained that when they came to write sales letters, they liked to use more specific address terms, such as 'person in charge' and 'surname + title'. Another reason was that 'dear customer' confined the relationship to buyer and seller, but they would like to establish a more personal relationship. These two more specific address terms seemed to fit this purpose well.

Generally speaking, the students and managers' views reflect the differences in their formal schemata. In all of the above formulaic components, the preferences of the managers were closer to what was found in the 20 letter corpus. The students' preferences did not approximate to the forms found in the 20 letters, but were closer in some respects to textbooks. This shows that a lack of understanding of communicative purposes can lead to different preferences for lower level of texts. The results show that the managers have a better understanding of the communicative purposes, and can refer to these purposes when making a choice at a lower level of text. Therefore they can find appropriate forms of formulaic components to achieve the purposes of both promotion and expressing politeness and respect. The students, however, because they lack a full understanding of the communicative purposes, can only refer to textbook advice or to other types of experience unrelated to promotion, such as their choice of 'ladies and gentlemen' and 'friends'.

6 Analysing the most and least successful letters

In this section, the most and least successful letters from the corpus will be analysed based on the top-down model. The focus of the analysis is on the content moves. As noted in Chapter 3, only the enterprise managers' views are discussed here, because their views reflect expert opinion about the nature of sales letters. As in Chapter 3, five letters were given to the managers to rate, and the most successful letter was Letter 9 with a mean score of 4.25, and the least successful letter was Letter 8 with a mean score of 1.52. In addition, ten managers were selected for interview. The purpose of these interviews was to find out how they judged the letters and what comments they had to make on the most and least successful letters. Both letters are discussed in detail below, with the managers' views

integrated into the analysis. Only the translated version is provided below; the original text is given in Appendix 1.

6.1 The analysis of the most successful letter

The structure of the most successful letter (Letters 9) is analysed below. The managers' views will also be provided in translation.

Letter 9

Dear computer customers,

How are you?

Do you want to buy a 500VA reserve UPS with brilliant function, good quality, and exquisite appearance at the lowest possible price? It also has the following extraordinary characteristics:

- It can run on direct current;
- It has an RS232 communication joint, and matches various kinds of UPS control system;
- It has a voltage stabilising function;
- It has a wide range of input voltage from 160-250 V;
- It has a battery protecting function;
- It is safe and reliable, and has passed the American UL and German TUV tests.

In order to thank the vast numbers of customers for their generous love of our product, and at the same time, to enable your computers to have the most reliable protection, we offer a special price for 500VA from September 21 - December 31.

Original price: 1790 yuan

Special price: 1380 yuan!!!

Now you (H) must be anxious to know what brand this UPS is? Of course it has to be UPSONIC. It is the crystallisation of American technology, and has a production history of more than 20 years. Models range from 100VA - 600 KVA, among which PCM - 50R (Reserve 500VA) is the most outstanding product, and will also be your most sensible choice.

The offer only lasts for three months, if you (H) are interested, (please) you can:

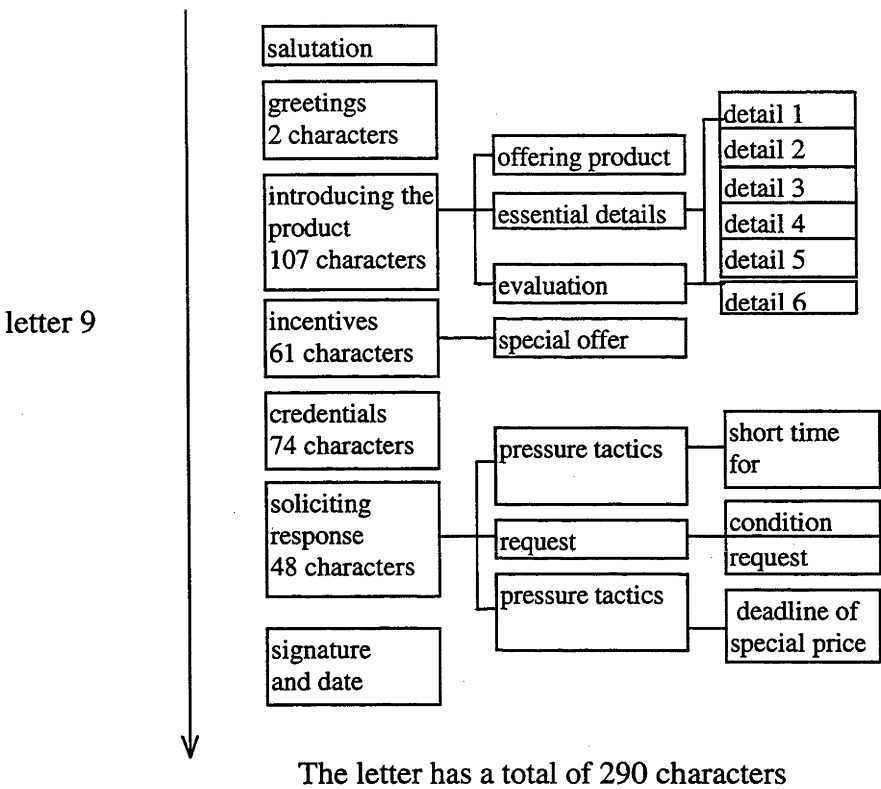
- Ring us directly;
- Fax the response form to us;
- Mail the response form to us.

Attention: the offer only lasts till December 31.

**XXX Survey Control Company
October 8, 1993**

The structure of the letter can be schematised as in the following figure.

Figure 7. The structural moves of Letter 9



As shown above, this letter has four typical content moves: (1) introducing the product, which involves offering the product, the essential details, the evaluation of the product, and predictions about desirable results for the product; (2) offering incentives, (3) establishing credentials, (4) soliciting a response, along with suggestions of urgency. All of the moves fit in well with the AIDA model. What does not really fit the model is the use of greetings. However, this respect, which has already been discussed in 4.1.2 of this chapter will not be considered further here as the discussion focuses on the content moves. This letter is mainly expository and the writer focuses on introducing the offer, using various strategies in order to convince the reader and attract the reader's interest to the product. Some of these points were also noted by the managers. The following comments are typical of those made by the managers on this letter.

- (1) “The main criterion for judging a letter is how much information a letter reveals to the reader in the first few seconds. This letter is best because it offers the most information possible in a few seconds. It was considered to be written in a clear style and to be the right length for a sales letter.”
- (2) “This letter employs symbols and different fonts to make the most important sections stand out. This is a very good strategy for attracting the reader’s attention.”
- (3) “This letter has the brand name of the product at the beginning of the letter to tell the reader what this letter is about at first sight.”
- (4) “Although the letter is short, it introduces all the necessary details about the product. There is no waste of words in the introduction.”
- (5) “This letter is ‘OK’ except that it says the product is your ‘most sensible choice’ (line 26). I do not like this kind of comment. The writer does not have to tell the reader what is sensible or not. The reader is able to make his/her own decisions.”

Although the above comments are not a complete list of all the managers’ views, they are representative of the managers’ knowledge structures and general expectations about sales letters. The first comment is related to the use of the formal schema: the preferred rhetorical structure is direct and focuses on introducing the product. The other three comments relate to the application of the world schema in terms of AIDA marketing knowledge. The second comment relates to attracting the reader’s interest. The third and fourth are related to the most important purposes of introducing the product and persuading the reader to buy the product. These comments can be used to provide some guidelines about what expert members expect from sales letters, and they will also be used in the detailed analysis below.

6.1.1 Detailed analysis

First of all, the communicative purposes can be seen as realised in the following two levels of moves and steps:

Move 1 Introducing the product (lines: 5-15)

Step 1 Offering product

Step 2 Evaluating product

Step 3 Essential detailing of the product

Move 2 Offering incentives (lines 16-21)

Move 3 Establishing credentials (lines: 22-26)

Move 4 Soliciting a response (lines 27-32)

Step 1 Using pressure tactics

Step 2 Making a request

Move 1 is composed of three steps, Move 4 is composed of two, and Move 2 and Move 3 can be seen as having one step only. All these moves and steps, together with the lower levels of relevant linguistic forms, and the top-down relationship between all three levels will be examined in detail below.

(1) Move 1, introducing the product (lines 5-15), is composed of the following three steps:

Step 1. Offering the product (lines 5-6)

Step 3. Essential detailing of the product (lines 8-15).

Step 2. Evaluating the product (line 14)

The first step is realised in a question form:

nín xiǎng yòng yōuhuì de jiàgé mǎi yī tái gōngnéng zhuōyuè,

you (H) want with special GNE price buy one Class. function brilliant

pǐnzhǐ yōuliáng, wàiguān jīngměi de hòubèi 500VA de UPS ma?

quality good look exquisite GNE reserve 500VA GNE UPS QM

Do you want to buy a 500VA reserve UPS with brilliant function, good quality, and exquisite appearance at the lowest possible price (lines 5-6)?

As noted previously (4.2.3), a question form is often used to begin an advertisement to attract the reader's attention.

Essential details are conveyed through 6 parallel sentences (lines 8-15). The details are clearly expressed, with each feature of the product standing out in each line. These details are introduced by:

tā hái jùyǒu xiàmiàn yǔzhòng bùtóng de tèxǐng:

it also have following from-others different GNE characteristic

It also has the following extraordinary characteristics (lines 6-7):

This introduction is a typical use of advertising language, describing the characteristics as ‘yǔzhòng bùtóng’ (extraordinary). In this way, the writer attracts the reader’s interest in what makes the characteristics extraordinary.

‘Evaluating the product’ is embedded in the essential details in Line 14, as indicated by the adjectives ‘safe and reliable’. In addition, evaluation of the product is also embedded in the first step, introducing the product, in the four-character expressions ‘gōngnéng zhuóyuè’ (brilliant function), ‘pǐnzhì yōuliáng’ (good quality) and ‘wàiguān jīngměi’ (exquisite appearance) (lines 5-6). The writer tries to convince the reader by referring to the functions, quality and even the look of the product, and this step is related to applying world schemata about market demand for reliable products. The use of these adjectives relates to the use of the formal schema as a device to achieve the purpose of giving positive evaluations.

(2) Move 2, offering incentives (lines 16-21), is realised in a subordinate-main clause structure as shown below:

wèile gǎnxiè guǎngdà yònghù yǐ nián ái duì chǎnpǐn de hòuài
in-order-to thank broad customer one year since for product GNE deep-love
tóngshí yě shǐ nǐmen de jìsuànjī dédào zuǐ kěkào de bǎohù,
same-time also enable you (pl) GNE computer obtain most reliable GNE protection
wǒmen cóng 9 yuè 21 rì - 12 yuè 31 rì duì 500VA jǐnxíng
we from September 21 date-December 31 date to 500VA make
yōuhuì
special-offer

In order to thank the vast numbers of customers for their generous love of our product, and at the same time, to enable your computers to have the most reliable protection, we offer a special price for 500VA from September 21 - December 31 (lines 16-19).

As noted in 4.2.1 of this chapter, the purpose connective ‘wèile’ (in order to) does not always indicate a purpose for the main clause. In Letter 9 the first section of the subordinate sentence, ‘wèile gǎnxiè guǎngdà yònghù’ (in order to thank the vast numbers of customers), is used to show politeness to the reader. The second section of the subordinate clause, ‘shǐ nǐmen de jìsuànjī dǎdào zuǐ kěkào de bǎohù’ (to enable your computer to have the most reliable protection) gives a background objective which the writer intends to achieve. In this way, the writer attaches importance to the special offer to be made in the main clause: the special offer is made for the reader’s benefits by protecting computers, which is the ultimate objective of service. In addition, this step also involves the use of formal schemata relating to Chinese subordinate and main clauses. This sequence indicates an end focus, what is important is not the subordinate clause, but the main clause which follows and the connective ‘wèile’ signals something important is coming up.

(3) Move 3 (lines 22-26), establishing credentials, is placed here instead of the more usual initial position found in the corpus, for the special purpose of keeping the reader in suspense. This purpose is revealed in a question form:⁹

nín xiànzài yīdìng xiǎng zhīdào zhè shì shénmo páizi de UPS?
you (H) now must want know this be what brand GNE UPS
Now you (H) must be anxious to know what brand this UPS is (line 22)?

This rhetorical question is used to begin to establish credentials. Up to now, the reader has been kept in suspense as to any credentials of the company. Only in the third part of this main paragraph does the writer begin to reveal the brand name. The section then develops

⁹ The original Chinese sentence is a rhetorical question. When translated into English it becomes affirmative.

from a description of the brand name to other credentials: American technology and more than 20 years' production history (lines 23-24). The inclusion of American technology is very important as it is related to the world schemata concerning marketing knowledge and the use of advanced technology to promote products. The credentials are followed by a positive evaluation: most outstanding product (line 25) and a prediction of desirable results: most sensible choice (line 26).

(4) Move 4, soliciting a response, is composed of the following steps:

Step 1 Using pressure tactics (line 27 and line 32)

Step 2 Making a request (lines: 27-31)

The second step, making a request, is both preceded and followed by pressure tactics. In other words, the first step is repeated:

Pressure tactics: the offer only lasts for three months (short time)

Request: if you are interested, please contact us

Pressure tactics: the duration of the special offer (deadline)

The pressure tactics are used twice as an emphasis to push the reader to respond.

The main step is the request, which is expressed through the following linguistic forms:

ruóguǒ nín yǒu xìngqù, qǐng nín kěyǐ: ...

if you (H) have interest please you (H) can

- zhíjiē dǎ diànhuà zhǐ wǒ gōngsī

direct ring telephone to I company

- jiāng huítiao diànchuán zhǐ wǒ gōngsī

PM response-form fax to I company

- jiāng huítiao yóuji zhǐ wǒ gōngsī.

PM response-form mail to I company

... if you are interested, (please) you (H) can:

- Ring us directly;

- Or fax the response form to us;

- Or mail the response form to us (lines 27-31).

The linguistic realisation of the request is shown in the conditional: *ruóguǒ* (if) + *qǐng* (please), the imperative and the sequence from subordinate to main. This request is polite, giving the reader two options by using the conditional clause. In the request, both the softener '*qǐng*' (please) and the modal verb '*kěyǐ*' (can) are used. Normally they do not co-occur, because '*qǐng*' is used in an imperative sentence, while '*kěyǐ*' is as a modal verb in a declarative sentence (Gao, 1986). In prescriptive terms, their co-occurrence would be a grammatical error, but it is still used here. There could be two reasons for this. First the writer may have committed a grammatical error. Second, the writer might prefer to combine these two forms as a strategy to make the request more polite. The request is respectful as it refers to the reader using the honorific form of 'you' and refers to self with non-honorific '*wǒ*'. This subordinate to main construction also serves to lighten the imposition of the request.

The above analysis can be summed up as follows. First, the communicative purposes can be seen as realised in this letter in a top-down model of moves, steps and linguistic forms. Each of these levels reflects the cognitive structuring of the text, and the communicative purposes are the central ideas to guide the development of the text. Second, each of these levels is related to the use of both formal and world schemata to achieve the communicative purposes. Third, as the managers suggested, this sales letter is direct¹⁰ in style: it begins with the offer of the product and proceeds to introduce the product and solicit a response. Finally, the letter appeals to both reason and emotion. For example, the detailed description of the product is related to reason, while the use of pressure tactics is related to emotion. The writer even tries to give advice about what is desirable although this approach is not highly favoured by all native speakers, as indicated in manager's Comment No. 5.

¹⁰ This style may be different from Kaplan's (1966) Eastern circular style, or Kirkpatrick's (1991) indirect style of Chinese request letters. Chinese sales letters seem to have a more direct style than request letters as the former relate to offering products.

6.2 The analysis of the least successful letter

The structure of the least successful letter (Letters 8) is analysed below. The managers' views will also be provided in translation.

Letter 8

Respected Mr. Manager:

As colleagues, we are both keenly interested in the present situation of the computer world and the mutual problems relating to its existence and development. (We) hope that (we) can discuss these problems with you (H) and seek mutual understanding and opportunities for cooperation.

After years of development, the number of computers produced by our country exceeded a million long ago. According to national and international statistics, as the product of the information society, 50% of these computers are used in Management Information System (MIS). MIS signals the modernisation of enterprises and an important avenue to take part in international competition and to increase overall profits. So we all pay great attention to it and its market is big.

However, now both customers and producers are confronted with quite a number of problems:

First of all, according to the needs of customers, MIS is one of the major applications. But MIS is a complex system project with advanced technology and strong social features and involves a revolution in management systems and measures. Besides internationally common problems, such as software difficulties and crises, we also meet other specific problems in our country, such as those relating to the economic opening-up, changing to the market economy, management mechanisms, various and constant reforms in fiscal, taxation and financial systems, and constant changes of MIS needs. Confronted with these conflicts and challenges, for a long time, we have made no important breakthroughs in ideas, technology or measures to develop MIS software; we are not able to endure the challenges in order to meet constantly changing needs. Many enterprises have encountered so many difficulties developing MIS that they have come either to a standstill or a premature end. (They) began with ambitious plans and good ideas to network computers. But owing to the difficulty to develop and maintain applied software, the networked rate is very low. It is a pity that many computers are only used as word processors. To enterprise leaders, computers are an investment with 'great-cost, and low-profit'. Yang Tianhang, Director of the Computer Section of Ministry of Electronics and Machinery says, "In the application and popularisation of computers, we have to carry out the principle that 'software goes first, and hardware follows'. This is the experience we have learnt at great expense." Vast numbers of customers have also become more and more aware of the importance of software.

Secondly, China is going to resume its position in GATT, which will bring changes to sales. Along with the tax-reforms and intensifying competition, it will become more and more difficult to do business, and (we) will make less and less profit, if (we) rely only on selling compatibles or well-known imported brands.

Judging from the above changes in customers' needs and the development of enterprises' management, there are two ways to adjust management direction in advance: gain the strength to produce your own computers; or promote more technology-aided services, selling software and hardware in a package, or making a contract to do the whole project, so that customers can solve the problem of putting the computers to use soon after their investment. It is also easy for

enterprises to gain both the customers' trust and higher profits; and this is a wise strategy for the development of enterprises.

Our company's GCMIS products will offer us a good opportunity for cooperation for our mutual development. At the end of 1993, GCMIS passed the technology appraisal held by leading professional members, Chinese and foreign experts, and gained very high praise. It was unanimously agreed that GCMIS had made successful breakthroughs in solving the following four long-standing key problems: long development cycle, difficulty of after-sales maintenance, lack of applicability and adaptability; and lack of initiatives for managerial people to use computers to raise the management level. The appraisal meeting was a grand occasion and all people present spoke enthusiastically. It was unanimously agreed that GCMIS had made important breakthroughs in developing MIS software; that it had great theoretical and practical value; and that GCMIS took the lead in the country and matched the advanced level of the world. Central TV, the National News Central Broadcasting, the People's Daily and other Central newspapers all reported that GCMIS signalled a new phase in the development of MIS. Its popularisation is bound to open up new prospects for MIS application.

GCMIS (individual computer / network) has the following five major characteristics:

- 1 Successfully solving problems relating to 'meeting immediate needs'. GCMIS is 'fool-proof' software and the broad range of managerial people can develop, maintain and utilise it without programming.
- 2 Brand-new system-making function. It surpasses the concept of a program generator in that, within half an hour, a management system can be made with wide applicability, high flexibility and high adaptability.
- 3 Creative system-revision function. System maintenance and revision can be made within ten minutes, which solves the long-standing problem relating to after-sales software maintenance. (This feature) constantly helps to make the system closer to perfection, so that the system will have lasting vitality.
- 4 With the efforts of nearly ten years, (we) have greatly generalised the professional features of MIS used by all enterprises. By using modern managerial ideas and methods, (we) have developed a basic MIS platform with powerful function and quick adaptability. It is absolutely impossible to develop this advanced MIS platform with program generators.
- 5 The network design is based on the idea of a distributive system and the customer's computer / service machine model. It has the practical function of providing both real-time and non-real-time data. It has good compatibility. Results developed by individual computers can be networked immediately. In this way, a solution has been offered to the predicament that 'it is easy setting up networks, but difficult to use with low networking rate'. (See details in GCMIS advertisements in Computer World, and China Computer Daily).

If your company is interested in MIS and its networks and has the actual strength to run MIS, together with GCMIS, your company can: 1. invest less but profit more; 2. greatly promote software-first and hardware-second sales, selling software and hardware in a package, so that customers will be pleased to use the computers soon after their investment. At the same time, (the sales) will help raise your company's image and win more customers; 3. If (you) have the ability to agree

95 to a contract to do the whole set of the project, there will be more profits. With
96 GCMIS, your project can be completed quickly, and you will get rid of the endless
97 worries about after-sale maintenance....

98 After making public the GCMIS network, it took the Ministry for the
99 Electronics Industry only ten days to develop 19 management projects by means of
100 utilising GCMIS, and the NOVELL network in the ministers' building was soon put
101 to use. Now people in all cities and provinces of our country are writing to us.
102 Therefore, we are planning to set up a group of agencies throughout the cities and
103 provinces. (We) hope that you will give careful consideration to it. (We) welcome
104 to our company to make an on-the-spot investigation and find out for yourself.
105 Strike while the iron is hot. Don't lose the opportunity: it will never come back
106 again if it is lost.

107 We hope to cooperate with you and have a prosperous future together!

108 May your business flourish!

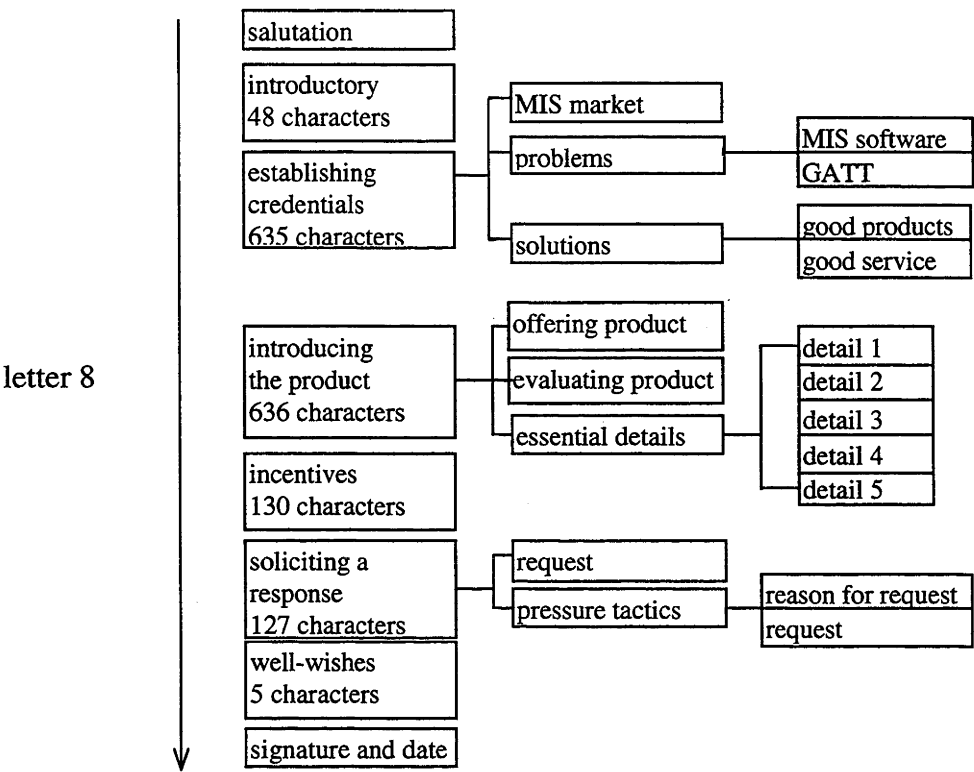
109 XXX

110 XX Advanced Technology Development Co.

111 April 3, 1994.

The structure of the letter can be schematised in the following figure:

Figure 8. An illustration of the structure of Letter 8



(The letter has 1576 characters altogether)

This figure shows that this letter has five major moves: (1) introductory section, (2) establishing credentials, (3) introducing the product, (4) offering incentives, and (5) soliciting a response. This sequence seems to be consistent with some other letters in the corpus. However, the letter has a great length of 1576 characters, which is more than five times Letter 9. In addition, among the five moves, ‘establishing credentials’ takes about same number of characters as the major move ‘introducing the product’: 635 characters vs. 636 characters, which indicates an unbalanced presentation. Since ‘establishing credentials’ is mainly used to attract the reader’s interest, such a long description seems to be unlikely to achieve this purpose because of its lengthiness. Some of the above points are also discussed by the managers as shown below.

- (1) “The letter is too long. I don’t think this is the right length for a sales letter. When managers receive this letter, I don’t think they will have the time to finish reading it.”
- (2) “I can see that the writer is really a computer expert. But I do not think it is appropriate to include so many technical terms in this letter.”
- (3) “The letter does not have a clear focus. I think the writer should focus on the introduction of the product. However, it seems to me that the letter focuses too much on how a related problem is solved.”
- (4) “The style of the letter is redundant all through the letter and especially in the first few paragraphs and at the end. The sentences are too long, and the wording is repetitive. If the reader is interested in the product, s/he will respond to the letter; but if s/he is not interested, no matter what you say, how much you say, the reader will not respond.”
- (5) “There is too much pleading when the writer requests the reader to respond. The writer should not try to beg the reader to take the offer but should focus on the introduction of the product.”

The above managers’ views, in part, reflect their world and formal schemata for writing sales letters, and explain why this letter is rated the least successful. Notice the first comment relates to the use of a formal schema concerning length. The second comment is still related to the formal schema about the specific use of lexis. The third is about where the focus should be placed. The fourth is again about the use of formal schemata in relation to relevant details. The fifth is related to both world schemata and formal schemata, both of which are needed to distinguish a request from pleading. These views will also be integrated in the following analysis.

6.2.1 Detailed analysis

In the analysis of this letter, moves, steps and linguistic forms will be analysed in a top-down manner. First of all, the moves and steps are described as follows:

Move 1	Introductory sections (lines 4-7)
Move 2	Establishing credentials (lines 8-49)
Move 3	Introducing the product (lines 50-88)

- Step 1 Offering the product
- Step 2 Evaluating the product
- Step 3 Essential detailing of the product
- Move 4 Offering incentives (lines 89-97)
- Move 5 Soliciting a response (lines 98-107)
- Step 1 Making a request
- Step 2 Using pressure tactics

As shown above, this letter can be divided into various levels of structure. There does not seem to be anything unusual about the structure as it follows the typical sequence found in other sales letters. However, a close look at the length indicates the redundancy of style, especially in ‘establishing credentials’ and ‘soliciting a response’. This point will be discussed further in the following analysis.

(1) Move 1, the introductory section (lines 4-7), can be seen as composed of one step, which is related to background information to the whole text and is realised in the following sentence:

zùwéi tóngháng, wǒmen dōu hěn guānxīn diànnǎojiè de
 as colleague we both very concern computer-world GNE
 xiànzhuàng yǐjī shēngcún fāzhǎn miànlín de gòngtóng wèngtí,
 present-situation and existence develop face GNE common issue
 xīwàng néng yǔ nín gòngtóng tàntǎo, xúnqiú gòngshí
 hope can with you (H) together discuss seek mutual-understanding
 yǔ hézuò jīhuì
 and cooperation opportunity

As colleagues, we are both keenly interested in the present situation of the computer world and the mutual problems relating to its existence and development. (We) hope that (we) can discuss these problems with you and seek mutual understanding and opportunities for cooperation (lines 4-7).

The above section is used to build a relationship with the reader, in this case, a colleague relationship. In this sentence, the topic shifts from inclusive we (including both the writer and the reader) to an implied exclusive we (excluding the reader). In the first half, the subject is ‘wǒmen ... dōu’ (we both). ‘We’ refers to both the writer and the reader. But in the second half of the sentence, although still sharing the first ‘wǒmen’ (we), as subject, the reader is excluded, referring to another ‘wǒmen’ (we) – the writer’s company. The writer is employing a strategy of taking the reader’s position and tries to include the reader on his side. The mixing of the two referents together with the address term ‘tóngháng’ (colleagues) helps to achieve this effect as an ice-breaker for the long discussion to follow.

(2) Move 2, establishing credentials (8-49), can be also seen as composed of one step, which is used to explicate the writer’s expertise as a computer expert. It is mainly expressed through a problem-solution strategy indicating what the problems are and how the writer can provide solutions. In this step, the writer discusses the general situation in the MIS market first, and then moves onto discussion about the problems MIS has, and finally provides the possible solutions as shown below:

Situation: Introduction to MIS computer market (lines 8-13)

Three sets of problems (lines 14-41):

- (1) Specific problems in our country (lines 19-23)
- (2) Difficulties in developing MIS software (lines 23-31)
- (3) Future difficulties in sales (lines 38-41)

Solutions (line 42-49):

- (1) Producing your own computers (line 44)
- (2) Providing better service (lines 44-47)

In the above problems, the first and second sets of problems are more urgent and therefore, take more characters than the third set which has only 62 characters. More strategies are also used, such as direct quotes from an important person (lines 33-36). Take the first set of problems as an example to indicate the style of this step:

chú guójiǐ shàng gòngtóng cúnzài de ruǎnjià kùnrǎo, ruǎnjiàn
besides international on mutual existence GNE software perplex software
wēijǐ de gòngxǐng wèntí yǐwài, zài wǒguó yòu yùdào gǎigē kāifàng,
crisis GNE mutual problem besides in I-country also meet reform open-up
shìchǎng jīngjì, guǎnlǐ jǐzhì, gèzhǒng cái, shuǐ, jīnróng zhǐdù de
market economy manage system various money tax finance system GNE
bùduàn biàngē, duǐ MIS de xūqíu bùduàn biànhuà de tèxíng wèntí.
constant change to MIS GNE need constant change GNE specific problem
Besides internationally common problems, such as software difficulties and crises, we
also meet other specific problems in our country, such as those relating to the
economic opening-up, changing to the market economy, management mechanisms,
various and constant reforms in fiscal, taxation and financial systems, and constant
changes of MIS needs (lines 19-23).

In the above example, the connectives ‘chú ... yǐwài’ (besides), and ‘yòu’ (and) link all the problems MIS research is confronted with, such as the software crisis and especially the changes to MIS market needs in China. Notice that the writer uses varied lexical items to describe the difficult situation, including ‘kùnrǎo’ (difficulties), ‘wēijǐ’ (crisis) and ‘wèntí’ (problems). These problems are mainly related to lack of technology push. This is also the major cause of the difficult situation in the MIS market.

The strategy of problem-solution is useful for establishing the writer’s credentials as a computer expert. The world and formal schemata used by the writer in this step are mainly related to how to research and solve a problem. However, the problem is that this strategy should be treated as subordinate information, not as a focus in the text as indicated in the managers’ Comment No. 3. The weakness lies mainly in the length this move. If the problems were discussed briefly, the length could be reduced dramatically.

(3) Move 3, introducing the product (50-88), is composed of the following steps:

Step 1: Offering the product (lines 50-51)

Step 2: Evaluating the product (lines 51-64)

Step 3: Essential detailing of the product (lines 65-88)

The offer of GCMIS products is made after 683 characters. The first step of offering the product is introduced by the following linguistic forms:

wǒ gōngsī de GCMIS chǎnpǐn wèi wǒmen gòngtóng fāzhǎn
I company GNE GCMIS product for we mutual develop
tígōng le liánghǎo de hézhuò jīhuì.
offer AM good GNE cooperate opportunity
Our company's GCMIS products will offer us a good opportunity for cooperation
for our mutual development (lines 50-51).

The writer seems to know the formal schemata and introduces the above offer in an affirmative sentence with the verb 'tígōng' (offer) as a main verb. This verb is commonly used in other sales letter in the corpus.

The second step, evaluating the product, includes the professionals' positive appraisals and favourable media reports. This section employs lexical boost through adjectives, 'sìzì jiēgòu' (four-character expressions) and NPs. An example is provided below to reflect the linguistic forms used at this level:

yīzhǐ rènwéi, GCMIS zài MIS de ruǎnjiàn kāifā gōngjù zhōng yǒu
consistent think GCMIS in MIS GNE software develop tool process have
zhòngdà tūpò, chuàngxīn, yǒu zhòngdà lǐlùn yǔ tuīguǎng
important breakthrough innovation have great theory and popularise
yǐngyòng jiàzhí, GCMIS chùyú guójì lǐngxiān, shǐjiè xiānjìn
apply value GCMIS in international pioneer world advance
shuǐpíng.

level

It was unanimously agreed that GCMIS had made important breakthroughs in developing MIS software; that it had great theoretical and practical values; and that

GCMIS took the lead in the country and matched the advanced level of the world (lines 58-61).

In the above example, all the underlined adjectives and NPs have been used to a give positive evaluation of the product. In addition, some expressions such as the NP ‘zhòngdà tūpò’ (important breakthroughs) and ‘guójǐ lǐngxiān’ (lead the trend of the world) are linked to the problems raised in the introductory section, and indicate that the advertised product provides solutions to these problems.

In the next step, some of the essential details of the product can also be treated as specific solutions to the problems. Take the first detail as an example below:

chénggōng de jiějué le “zhíjiē miànxiàng” wèntí. shǐ shǐ guǎngdà
successful GNE solve AM direct face problem be so-that broad
qǐguǎn rényuán wúxū biānchéng, jiù néng kāifā wéihù hé
enterprise-manage people no-need program also can develop maintain and
shǐyòng de shēnrù qiǎnchū de ‘shǎguā’ ruǎnjiàn.
use GNE deep-enter shallow-exit GNE ‘fool’ software.
Successfully solving problems relating to ‘meeting immediate needs’. GCMIS is
‘fool-proof’ software and the broad range of managerial people can develop,
maintain and utilise it without programming (lines 67-69).

The above focuses on offering a solution to an MIS problem, as indicated by using the lexis of problem solving, such as ‘jiějué ... wèntí’ (solve a problem) in the first sentence. The second sentence provides details about how easy it is to use the new software now. The metaphor ‘shǎguā’ (‘fool-proof’) is used to indicate such progress.

This section is more clear-cut in structure than the problem-solution section and is similar to sales letters in general. The writer focuses on the introduction of the product and tries to convince the reader about its reliable quality. However, this section takes up only 40% of the whole text and does not show prominence as a major move. It is overshadowed

by the comparatively less important section of problem-solution in the move of ‘establishing credentials’.

(4) Move 4, offering incentives (89-97), is also quite lengthy and has 130 characters. The content of this move is related to predicting the future benefits that the product can bring, such as increased sales, benefits and good service.

Take the following benefits the writer offers as an example:

jiāshàng GCMIS, kě shǐ guì gōngsī: 1. tóurù shǎo, lìyùn chǎnchū gāo;
plus GCMIS can make you (H) company: 1. invest little, profit output high
... together with GCMIS, your company can 1. invest less, but profit more (lines 90-91).

In the above, the phrase ‘jiāshàng GCMIS’ implies an conditional, indicating if the reader uses GCMIS. The benefits include: ‘tóurù shǎo’ (low investment) and ‘lìyùn gāo’ (high profits). These lexical items are related to gaining profits and can be very attractive incentives for the reader. However, as mentioned earlier, the major problem is the lengthiness, which can harm the effectiveness of this strategy.

(5) Move 5, soliciting a response (98-107), is composed of the following two steps:

- Step 1 Making a request (lines 98-104, and line 107)
- Step 2 Using pressure tactics (lines 105-106)

In the first step, the letter moves from reason for the request to request. Reasons for the request include: (1) successful record of GCMIS (lines 99-101); (2) great demand for the product (line 101) and (3) increase in agencies to meet the demand (line 102). The request is: we hope you will consider it and welcome you to our company (line 103-104). Even within the reason section, reason (3) can be regarded as the result of reason (1) and (2). These three reasons then provide the whole rationale for why the addressee should respond. The complexity of the reasons and request is shown below:

Because: | cause | (1) successful record of GCMIS
Reasons | | (2) great demand for the product
 | effect | (3) increase in agencies
Therefore: Request — respond to our letter

The writer develops from subordinate to main or from the situation to the response and plan, and then moves on to the request. This sequence is quite similar to that found by Kirkpatrick (1991, 1993) in Chinese request letters and is used as a politeness strategy to lighten the imposition of the request. However, this is the only instance found in the sales letter corpus and would not be considered as a typical form for sales letters. The request, which is the core in the request section appears quite late in this move, and is expressed in this way:

xīwàng nín néng shènzhòng kǎolǚ, huānyíng láirén kǎochá hé
hope you(H) can careful consider welcome come-person investigate and
liáojiě.
understand
(We) hope that you will give careful consideration to it. (We) welcome you to our
company to make an on-the-spot investigation, and find out for yourself (lines 103-
104).

Normally a request employs either ‘xīwàng’ (hope) or ‘huānyíng’ (welcome). The writer uses both of them as underlined above, which can be seen as repetition. However, the major problem is that the actual request is overshadowed by the preceding reasons.

This off-focus weakness is also found in the second step, using pressure tactics. This step also takes a lot of space (lines 105-106), and could simply be shortened to one phrase ‘zhuāzhù jīyù’ (Don’t lose the opportunity. line 105). All the rest of this step basically has the same meaning. Therefore the above style turns out to be very repetitive, and this redundancy weakens greatly the intended urgency.

The writer also repeats the request at the end of the letter (line 107), which further adds to the repetitive nature and lengthiness of the letter, as indicated in managers’
Comment No. 4.

To sum up, although this letter follows the typical macro-structure of a sales letter, developing from an introductory section, to introducing an offer, towards soliciting a response, it fails to employ well-defined formal schemata for writing sales letters. For example, 'establishing credentials' and 'soliciting a response' contain too many details. The former leads to an imbalance of the focus in the text, and the latter makes the letter almost into a plea. As a result of the inadequate use of formal schemata, two major communicative purposes have been greatly weakened. First, because of the lengthiness, the reader risks losing interest in reading the letter, thus the purpose of attracting the reader's attention may not be achieved successfully. Second, persuasiveness may also be weakened by the emotional nature of the plea used to push the reader to action.

7 Conclusion

This chapter analyses the 'pingxing' (equals writing to each other) genre, sales letters, with the combined approach proposed in Chapter 2. The study of this genre can be viewed as a process of applying world and formal schemata to the study of communicative purposes through a top-down model. This view has been discussed in the following three areas:

First of all, this chapter illustrates that communicative purposes can be used as a reliable basis for studying a text. Well-defined world schemata are needed to identify communicative purposes. The world schemata mainly refer to marketing knowledge, and knowledge about cultural protocols and reader-writer relationships.

Secondly, this chapter shows how Chinese sales letters can be analysed using a top-down manner, in which communicative purposes are realised in lower levels of moves, steps and linguistic forms. There are two kinds of moves found in the corpus: formulaic moves and content moves, and these moves, in turn can be divided into steps, encoded by linguistic forms. The purposes of the formulaic moves are to indicate the form of the letter, and to build relationships with the reader. For example, greetings are preferred in the corpus as a means of achieving politeness and a personal relationship.

The content moves also strive to achieve several purposes, among which persuading the reader is found to be the most important, because this will cause the reader to respond.

This point is reinforced by the managers' views. Therefore the move of introducing the product becomes the focus of the letter, and this is where persuasion occurs.

Some content moves appear to be obligatory while others are optional. The obligatory moves appear to be related to the major communicative purposes. For example, 'introducing the product' and 'soliciting a response' appear to be obligatory, and these two moves are related to 'persuading the reader' and 'calling for a response'. These two moves represent the typical features of a sales letter. Other moves, such as the introductory section, establishing credentials and offering incentives appear to be optional, and are used to accomplish subordinate purposes. For example, the introductory section can be used to establish relationships. However, this is by no means to say that these optional moves are not important at all. For example establishing the writer's credentials as an expert in a certain area can be attractive to the reader, and can even help persuade the reader.

In a similar way, some steps appear to be obligatory and some optional. The obligatory steps play an important role to realise the moves. For example, 'making a request' appears to be obligatory and 'soliciting a response' is basically realised in the request. 'Using pressure tactics' appears only to be optional, and plays a subordinate role in the same move.

The sequence of the content moves is relatively flexible compared to the formulaic moves. For example 'establishing credentials' can occur quite early or late in the letter. Repetition of moves and steps is found in the case of 'requests' and 'pressure tactics', and seems to emphasise the call for a response. Splitting of steps is also found, especially in 'evaluating the product'.

The linguistic forms are also used in relation to the communicative purposes. Certain choices of forms are typical of certain moves. For example, requests prefer a series of polite forms such as the conditional clause, 'wàng' imperative, and so on. In addition, some words typically used in 'shangxing' genre are deliberately used to achieve a high level of politeness and respect. This provides evidence to show that the writer follows the politeness principle of maximising the reader's benefit at his/her own cost. All of the above factors give evidence about the general conventions of writing this genre.

Questionnaire and interview results from the enterprise managers and the business writing students were discussed in order to examine how the understanding of communicative purposes can influence the lower levels of text. The results show that the

managers have a more effective understanding of these purposes because they have better knowledge structures built on the basis of their writing experience, and therefore they can relate their preferences regarding lower level choices to these purposes. The students, however, are non-expert members and often express views which reflect textbook advice because of their unfamiliarity with business writing practice. The divergence indicates that the expert managers' views substantiate the findings in authentic letters and the students' views reflect textbook advice, although both managers and students shared similar cultural values in the use of some forms.

The analysis of the most and least successful letters identified by the managers shows what effective or non-effective writing is like. The most successful letter follows the general expectations for using formal schemata. This letter focuses on the major move of introducing the product, and uses appropriate linguistic forms. The least successful letter, however, fails to meet these expectations. For example, although the structure of this letter seems to be appropriate, the repetitions and off-focus descriptions hinder the realisation of the communicative purposes.

To sum up, by analysing Chinese sales letters, we have provided an example of the application of the combined approach in genre analysis. We have found that Chinese sales letters have a set of communicative purposes and these purposes are realised at various levels in the text. We also found that the understanding of communicative purposes can influence choices of linguistic forms for a text. Therefore, communicative purposes can be seen as a reliable criterion for analysing genre.

In addition, the analysis also shows, from the perspective of genre development, what a new genre such as Chinese sales letters can be composed of. It seems that the emergence of this new genre is not an isolated process, but related to many sociolinguistic factors such as changes in communicative needs in a market economy and cultural values. The writing conventions of this genre also reflect these changes.

Chinese sales letters in this transitional stage, on the one hand, reflect the marketing strategies such as the AIDA model. This can be a western influence, but it can also be a general rule of marketing. The use of 'you' orientation in Chinese sales letters can also suggest a western influence. This can indicate that a new genre can also be influenced by the forms of other existing genres from other cultures. In addition, these letters still retain

cultural specific values, such as relationship building, as an important communicative purpose in Chinese business practice.

Perhaps the rapid development of this genre can also account partly for the problems with textbook advice. There may be a time lag before the textbook advice can catch up with the development of sales letters. Therefore it is easier for textbooks to focus on prescribing rules for the letters, than on a comprehensive study of various communicative purposes.

Chapter 5. Genre analysis of Chinese sales invitations

1 Introduction

In the last chapter we analysed the ‘pingxing’ genre of Chinese sales letters. In this chapter we shall examine another ‘pingxing’ sales genre – sales invitations. Sales invitations are treated as a different genre from sales letters, mainly because they have a very different purpose from sales, which is to invite the reader as a guest, although invitations may also share other similar purposes relating to sales. The approach to be used in this chapter is the combined approach proposed in Chapter 2.

The examination comprises the following five steps:

- (1) A brief introduction will be given to Chinese sales invitations based on textbook advice.
- (2) Relevant world knowledge will be discussed and the communicative purposes of this genre studied in detail.
- (3) A top-down analysis will be applied to the general structure of the sales invitations in the twenty-letter corpus. As discussed in Chapter 3, data are drawn from authentic letters.
- (4) Business students’ views on language use at different levels of the text will be compared with those of enterprise managers. This chapter will further examine whether the kinds of differences found in the previous chapter appear in the genre of sales invitations.
- (5) The structure of the most and least successful letters will be analysed in detail as an illustration of the use of the combined approach and to indicate the conventions of writing sales invitations. As with the analysis of sales letters in the last chapter, the managers’ views will be integrated into the analysis, as they can represent the discourse community of business letter writing.

2 Chinese sales invitations: a textbook approach

Sales invitations are a common type of business letter used to promote sales in Chinese. Companies organise exhibitions and invite other companies who are potential customers to come and see their products. Deals can be made at the exhibitions. This is an effective way to promote sales, because ‘seeing is believing’. In this way, sales invitations are playing an increasingly important role in Chinese business.

As discussed in Chapter 1, sales invitations are written between companies and belong to ‘gongwen’ (official letters). In addition, since sales invitations intend to both invite the reader and promote sales, they involve features of invitation and promotion genres. First of all, it is an invitation, as inviting is a kind of directive which is used to “influence the addressee’s actions, emotions, beliefs and attitudes” (Vestergaard and Schroder 1985:16). Secondly it is related to sales, because the writer invites the reader in order to sell the product. Therefore, sales invitations may involve complex communicative purposes, some of which may be culture specific. Inviting is understood in the Chinese context as being related to relationship building, and this can be an important factor in understanding this genre. Relationship building is also the communicative purpose that textbooks emphasise.

I found only three textbooks (Lu et al., 1993; Zhao and LÜ, 1994; Zhuge and Chen, 1994) that discuss sales invitations. There can be several reasons for this lack. First, this genre is rather new, as noted in Chapter 1. Second, sales invitations have complex features relating to both sales and invitations. It is hard to exactly specify where this genre belongs. All three textbooks which include sales invitations tend to discuss it as a type of ‘liyixin’ (letters of etiquette), or ‘shejiaoxin’ (letters of social contact), rather than as a ‘gongwen’ (official letters) genre. The meaning of ‘shèjiāo’ (social contact) is readily apparent, however, ‘liyixin’ needs some explanation. According to Zhuge and Chen (1994: 361), ‘lǐyí’ means ‘lǐjié’ (etiquette) and ‘yíshì’ (ceremonies). Therefore, Chinese sales invitations are treated as a form of etiquette for building relationships among people. This can be related to the influence of Confucian concepts in which ‘lǐ’ (rites) are often emphasised. According to Zhuge and Chen (1994), ‘liyixin’ include invitations, welcome speeches, farewell speeches, etc. and relationship building is the most important purpose in these types of letters. Sales, in these textbooks, become less important than relationship building. As Lu et al. (1993:189) explain, the purpose of a sales invitation is to:

zēngjìn yǒuyì, fāzhǎn màoùyì.

increase friendship develop trade

increase friendship, and develop trade.

In the above quote, Lu et al. (1993) explicate two purposes: increasing friendship and developing trade, with ‘yǒuyǐ’ (friendship) mentioned first for emphasis and developing trade placed afterwards in a less prominent position. Here the meaning of ‘yǒuyǐ’ is an ambiguous term and needs to be further defined. Literally this word means ‘friendship’, but in the sales invitation context, it means more than this, because the writer does not really want to be a friend to the reader, but rather a business partner. Therefore, the ‘yǒuyǐ’ here can be understood as establishing a kind of personal contact or relationship with the reader. The importance of the purpose of relationship building can be further explained by Chinese cultural values relating to collectivism (Hofstede 1980, 1991) noted in Chapter 4. Inviting can be seen not only as a directive speech act in which one person invites another, but also a social activity which builds relationships in the collective.

From the above discussion of sales invitations, it can be seen that there is a general tendency for textbooks to treat sales invitations as a ‘liyixin’ (letters of etiquette). This treatment, in fact, directly mimics the rules prescribed for general invitation writing which has a long history in Chinese written discourse. This claim can be confirmed by the fact the rules illustrated for sales invitation writing are very similar to those given for writing general invitations in Gu (1995), He and Lǚ (1991), Chen (1991), Zhao (1992), and Zheng (1994). For example, textbooks on general invitation writing emphasise the writing of formulaic components and the polite and respectful use of language. In exactly the same way, the textbooks on sales invitations follow this advice and prescribe the rules for writing sales invitations which are summarised below:

- (1) The invitee’s full name, or the invited company’s name must be clearly indicated. If the invitee is an individual, title or honorific terms such as ‘zūnjīng de’ (respected) can be used to indicate cordiality.
- (2) The body of the letter comprises the aim of the exhibition, activities to be held, and time and place these activities are to be held.
- (3) The letter ends with signature of the writer and the date should be included
- (4) Sales invitations should use polite, cordial language, such as the polite closing ‘jīngqǐng guānglín’ (respectfully invite you to come).

In the above advice, the first and third items are about the use of formulaic components. The second concerns what should be included as the main content, which is basically related to informing the reader about the activities. The fourth item emphasises the use of polite language to achieving the purpose of ‘lǐyí’ (etiquette), which can be seen as related to relationship building. In sum, the textbook advice emphasises the above communicative purposes. As such, does it reflect the complex genre of sales invitations? And is it enough to use the above rules to analyse sales invitations? These questions can be answered by discussing the following example (quoted and translated from Zhao and LÜ 1994):

邀 请 参 加 交 流 交 易 会

XXX国工业部,

为了促进国际工业先进技术的交流与推广, 中国科学技术情报研究所与联合国工业开发组织等单位, 定于 1994 年 12 月 1 日在中国科技情报研究所展览大厅联合举办 “94’ 北京国际技术市场交流交易会”。特邀贵部派代表团前来参加。如有参展项目, 请于 10 月 1 日前向大会筹备处函订参展面积, 并请于 10 月底前将参展技术设备送到展览大厅。

到目前为止, 已有来自英国, 泰国, 美国, 加拿大等几十个国家和中国国内的几十个单位的项目报名参加。

恭候届时光临。

94’ 北京国际技术市场交流交易筹备处
一九九四年九月一日

Heading	(1) An invitation to attend an exhibition
Salutation	(2) XXX Ministry,
Body	(3) In order to promote the exchange and popularisation of the world advanced industrial technology, (4) the Chinese Information Technology Research Institute and the UN Industry Development Organisation have decided that “94’s Beijing International Technology Trade Exhibition” is to be held in the Exhibition Hall of the Chinese Information Technology Research Institute on December 1, 1994. (5) You (H) are (especially) invited to send a delegation to attend the exhibition. If you are planning to exhibit your products, please order exhibiting space by mail through the preparatory department, and send the exhibiting equipment to the exhibition hall by the end of October.

So far, we have already received dozens of applications from other countries, such as England, Thailand, America, and Canada, and dozens of companies from inside the country.

Polite closing (6) Awaiting respectfully your presence (H).

Signature
and date

(7) The preparatory department,
94's Beijing International Technology Trade Exhibition
September 1, 1994.

In this example, the letter can be broken into the following seven items (as indicated by the added numbers in the letter):

- (1) the heading¹¹
- (2) salutation, in the form of the company's name
- (3) the objective of the exhibition
- (4) introducing the activities: the exhibition and its time and place
- (5) inviting the reader politely
- (6) polite closing
- (7) signature and date

Generally speaking, this letter exemplifies the textbook advice in relation to both formulaic components and the main content in the body of the letter. In formulaic components, the letter includes a heading, a salutation, a polite closing, and the signature and date. In the main content, the letter starts with the objectives of the invitation and moves on to an introduction to the activity and time and place it is to be held. The language of the letter is polite and respectful, as indicated in the polite closing and the use of honorific forms.

However, the textbook advice fails to give an account of other relevant communicative purposes which can be identified, such as persuading the reader to attend the activities. This is the perlocutionary force. The textbook advice mainly emphasises the writing of formulaic components, the informational features, and the purpose of relationship building. This is another example to support our claim in the last chapter that textbooks tend to overlook perlocutionary forces. As can be seen in the above example, however, the writer also tries to convince the reader with information about the scale of the international

¹¹ Although the heading is not discussed in the above textbook advice, it is included here as a matter of course because it is an important characteristic in 'yaochingxin' (invitations) writing in both textbooks and actual writing practice.

exhibition in the second paragraph. This indicates that it is necessary to further explore the communicative purposes of sales invitations, because the prescribed rules do not reflect the full range of purposes.

Besides the above mentioned weakness, there is another weak point in textbook advice. That is, that textbooks tend to treat this genre only as a type of invitation, while ignoring other features. As noted earlier, sales invitations are a complex genre. It is, first of all, a kind of 'gongwen' (official letters) written between companies, and so can be expected to differ from other invitations, such as a wedding invitation. It is also related to sales, because the writer has the intention of targeting the reader as a potential customer. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to treat sales invitations only as a 'shejiaoxin' (a letter of social contact). Some other factors relating to 'gongwen' (official letters) and 'sales' also merit attention. This chapter will attempt to combine the three factors and treat sales invitations as an individual genre of 'gongwen' (official letters). In the meantime, the culture specific features of relationship building emphasised in textbooks will be taken as only one of the communicative purposes.

The following discussion will focus on further identification of communicative purposes from the twenty-letter corpus (see Chapter 3). A top-down analysis will be undertaken to determine how these purposes are realised in each level of the text.

3 Studying the communicative purposes of sales invitations

As discussed in Chapter 2, communicative purposes are a very important feature in genre analysis (Swales, 1990). World schemata are mainly discussed because they are central to identify the communicative purposes of the genre. In the case of sales invitations, the world schemata are composed of knowledge in three areas: inviting, marketing, and the relationship between the writer and the reader. Since the last two kinds have already been discussed in the last chapter, only the first will be discussed here.

The first kind of knowledge refers to the cultural protocol of inviting, and the fact that Chinese invitations are related to behaviour of respect and cordiality. When the writer invites the reader, s/he is, at the same time, showing respect to the reader by doing so. In this aspect, inviting is very different from other types of directives such as requests.

The most obvious and major purpose of a sales invitation is to invite the reader to attend an exhibition, and to elicit the desired response, and this involves a complex communicative process. The complexity increases when both sales and inviting have to be taken into consideration. If the above world schemata are appropriately used, one can, on close observation, ascertain the following communicative purposes from the corpus:

- 1 To invite the reader to attend the exhibition, and encourage further communication
- 2 To inform the reader about the exhibition
- 3 To build a host-guest relationship with the reader
- 4 To achieve a positive public image
- 5 To attract the reader's attention and interest
- 6 To give positive appraisals of the exhibition
- 7 To persuade the reader to attend the exhibition

In identifying the above purposes, one needs to refer to all of the world schemata mentioned earlier. In general, the above seven purposes can be divided into two kinds: inviting the reader to the exhibition and advertising the exhibition. Inviting is the unique feature of this genre, while advertising the exhibition is quite similar to the purposes of sales letters. Generally speaking, the first three purposes in the above list are related to inviting, because they focus on information about the activities and inviting the reader to come to the exhibition. Among the three, inviting the reader is the central idea and the other two are subordinate to it, because the second purpose is related to providing some information about the invitation, while the third explicates what kind of relationship inviting intends to achieve as often emphasised in Chinese textbooks.

The last three purposes are related partly to the marketing model of AIDA. For example, attracting the reader's attention and interest make up the first two stages of AIDA. The sixth and seventh are related to bringing about the desire to attend the exhibition. 'Giving appraisals' is subordinate to the purpose of persuading the reader because it supports the persuasion by giving positive evaluations.

The fourth, achieving a positive public image, can be seen as a subordinate purpose to 'inviting the reader' and 'persuading the reader', as a good image is desirable in invitations and sales.

From this perspective, one can see that sales invitations can basically fit into this marketing model, because inviting the reader to attend an exhibition is a kind of marketing practice. However, it is not really a sales letter genre, because it is also an invitation and seeks to establish a guest-host relationship with the reader. Another point that is worth noting is that although the purpose of inviting the reader can be related to calling for action, this purpose does not really fit into the last stage of the AIDA model, since it is mainly related to inviting the reader.

Among these seven purposes, persuading the reader and inviting the reader are the most important because these two purposes can guarantee the success of an invitation. When the reader is persuaded, the letter is only one step away from action. Inviting the reader is the ultimate purpose of an invitation. Achieving a positive public image is only subordinate as it is not related to the immediate sales, but may influence the reader in the long term. The initial purpose for persuasion is to attract attention and interest. Therefore, among the above seven purposes, inviting and persuading the reader are the most important.

As noted earlier, textbooks fail to reveal all these communicative purposes, and tend to overlook perlocutionary forces such as 'persuading the reader' in sales invitations, an aspect which will be further explored in our discussion.

4 The top-down process of realising communicative purposes

In this section, the concept of top-down information processing is applied in order to study how communicative purposes are realised in the lower levels of the text, such as moves, steps and linguistic forms, and how these lower levels contribute to their general realisation. The communicative purposes of sales invitations in the corpus were found to be realised by the following structural moves:

Level 1: The text which reflects the communicative purposes

Levels 2 and 3: Moves and steps

Formulaic moves

1 Heading

2 Opening moves:

- Salutation
- Greetings (rare)
- 3 Closing moves:
 - Invitation-related closings or well-wishes
 - Signature and date
- Content moves:
 - 1 Introducing the exhibition
 - Step 1 Providing background information
 - Step 2 Indicating background objectives
 - Step 3 Providing information about the exhibition
 - 2 Inviting the reader
 - 3 Establishing credentials
 - 4 Describing the exhibition
 - Step 1 Providing essential details of the exhibition
 - Step 2 Evaluating the exhibition or the exhibits
 - 5 Offering incentives
 - Step 1 Indicating benefits the exhibition may bring
 - Step 2 Offering a special rate
 - 6 Providing registration details
 - Step 1 Giving registration details
 - Step 2 Giving further contact information

As shown above, sales invitations, like sales letters discussed in the last chapter, have two kinds of moves: the formulaic moves and the content moves. All these moves can be seen as a further realisation of the communicative purposes. For example, the formulaic moves are related to inviting, and relationship building, as they are important features of an invitation. In content moves, Move 1 is related to the purpose of informing the reader about the exhibition, Move 2 relates to the purpose of inviting the reader, Move 3 relates to attracting the reader's interest, Move 4 relates to giving positive appraisals and persuading the reader to attend the exhibition, Move 5 relates to persuading the reader, and Move 6 can be seen as related to the purpose of informing the reader and encouraging further communication. However, the above links between the moves and purposes are only a rough guideline. In fact, the relationships are much more complex. For example, sometimes 'establishing credentials' can be a persuasive element to influence the reader. However, there are also some relatively stable relationships between moves and communicative purposes; for example, the informational elements about the exhibition in the first and last moves, and the feature of giving positive appraisals in the fourth move of describing the exhibition.

The steps indicate a lower structural level used to encode moves. They are also closely related to the communicative purposes. In encoding moves, some steps are more important than others. For example, in the first move of introducing the exhibition, Step 3, providing information about the exhibition, will be more important than the first two steps, because this is where the major information about the exhibition lies. This step also contributes most to the realisation of the purpose of informing the reader about the exhibition. All these relationships will be discussed in detail in the relevant sections in this chapter. A further level under steps, linguistic forms, will also be examined below.

4.1 Analysing the formulaic moves

As sales letters, the formulaic moves of sales invitations are also composed of: headings, salutations, greetings, well-wishes or invitation-related closings, and signature and date. Although the sales invitations in the corpus indicate differences in the employment of formulaic components, the social distance between the writer and the reader in all the letters was basically the same: they are sales invitations between companies, a writer who represents one company invites the reader who represents another. This means that the writer uses the formulaic components as a symbol or strategy to encode actual social distances as noted earlier. The formulaic components of the 20 letters are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. The usage of the formulaic components in the 20-letter corpus

Letter No	Heading	Salutation	Greeting	well-wishes or closings
letter 1	+	Ø	Ø	Ø
letter 2	+	+	Ø	+
letter 3	+	+	+	+
letter 4	+	+	Ø	+
letter 5	+	+	Ø	+
letter 6	Ø	+	Ø	+
letter 7	+	+	Ø	+
letter 8	+	+	Ø	+
letter 9	+	+	+	Ø
letter 10	+	Ø	Ø	Ø
letter 11	+	+	Ø	Ø
letter 12	+	+	Ø	+
letter 13	+	+	Ø	Ø
letter 14	+	+	Ø	+
letter 15	+	+	Ø	Ø
letter 16	+	Ø	Ø	+
letter 17	+	+	Ø	Ø
letter 18	+	+	Ø	+
letter 19	+	+	Ø	Ø
letter 20	+	+	Ø	Ø

In Table 7, it can be seen that nineteen letters had headings, and eleven had well-wishes or invitation-related closings. Salutations were used in seventeen letters. Only two letters used greetings. This shows that the use of the formulaic components basically follows the rules advised in textbooks. The reason for this may be that the use of headings and well-wishes are important features for indicating the genre of an invitation. The heading starts the invitation and the well-wishes conclude it.

The use of greetings is not very frequent. The reason for this can be that greetings are mainly used for the purpose of building a personal relationship as discussed in the last chapter. At the same time, invitations are related to building a host-guest relationship with the reader. Although these two kinds of relationship may be different in degree, the latter indicating more respect to the reader than the former, they have a very similar function in relationship building. Therefore it appears that there is no need to include greetings when the purpose of relationship building can be otherwise achieved in a more respectful way.

4.1.1 The linguistic forms used as headings

The use of headings is discussed here as they are an important feature of invitations, including sales invitations. The headings used in the corpus are closely related to the purpose of inviting, which is often explicitly expressed. For example:

jǐuwǔ zhōngguó zhèngzhōu màocùhuì yāoqǐngxìn
 nine five China Zhengzhou trade-promote-exhibition invitation
 An Invitation to '95 China Zhengzhou 95's Trade Exhibition

The above heading indicates the writer's intention through the term of 'yāoqǐngxīn' (invitations). In this way, the writer is building a relationship with the reader as a host and guest. At the same time, the heading also indicates what kind of exhibition the reader is invited to.

The invitation can also be expressed by similar terms to indicate inviting. For example, the heading of another letter is:

rèliè huānyíng gèwèi láibīn nílín zhǐdǎo qiàntán yèwù
warm welcome every come-guest come (H) instruct talk business
We Warmly Welcome Guests to Come (H) and Talk Business with us.

Although this heading does not use the term of ‘yāoqǐngxǐn’ (invitations), the form ‘huānyíng’ (welcome) expresses a similar meaning to the reader, because it expresses hospitable attitudes towards the reader. In addition, lexical items such as ‘lái bīn’ (guest) and ‘lǐlín’ (H come) are also clearly related to inviting.

4.1.2 The linguistic forms used as salutations

The salutations used in the corpus are shown in the following table:

Table 8. Usage of a breakdown of the address terms used as salutations

Letter No	Salutation (trans.)	Salutation (Chinese)
letter 1	respected reader (H)	jǐng qīzhě
letter 2	∅ salutation	∅ salutation
letter 3	person in charge (H)	guǐ dānwèi fùzé tóngzhǐ
letter 4	company name	gōngsī míngzi
letter 5	respected reader (H)	jǐng qīzhě
letter 6	Mr+surname (H)	zūnjǐng de mǎumǒu xiānshēng
letter 7	company name	gōngsī míngzi
letter 8	company name	gōngsī míngzi
letter 9	ladies and gentlemen (H)	zūnjǐng de nǚshìmen xiānshēngmen
letter 10	respected reader (H)	jǐng qīzhě
letter 11	company name	gōngsī míngzi
letter 12	company name	gōngsī míngzi
letter 13	respected reader (H)	jǐng qīzhě
letter 14	company name	gōngsī míngzi
letter 15	respected reader (H)	jǐng qīzhě
letter 16	∅ salutation	∅ salutation
letter 17	respected reader (H)	jǐng qīzhě
letter 18	Mr+surname (H)	zūnjǐng de mǎumǒu xiānshēng
letter 19	Mr+surname	mǎumǒu xiānshēng
letter 20	company name	gōngsī míngzi

As shown in the above table, the letters, generally speaking, tend to use honorific forms to indicate respect and politeness to the reader. This use of salutations is a typical feature of invitations. Table 8 also shows that the frequently used salutations are ‘gōngsī míngzi’ (company name) used by seven letters and ‘jǐng qīzhě’ (respected reader) used by six letters. The reason for the frequent use of company name may be that sales invitations are usually directed to companies, and the writer wants the reader to know that the company in general is invited instead of specific individuals. ‘Jǐng qīzhě’ is also preferred because this is the address term that is formal and meets the standard of respect required by an invitation.

Most of the above address terms used as salutations have been discussed in the last chapter. Only one form is not covered, which is ∅ salutation, or the lack of a salutation. ∅ salutation does not seem to be appropriate for a letter, because a letter usually requires a salutation. This point is often stressed in letter writing manuals, such as Zhao and LÜ (1994), and Chen (1991), and salutations are also preferred by the native speakers in sales letters as discussed in the last chapter. The use of ∅ salutation does not seem to be a

frequent practice in sales invitations, however, and is only used in two letters. Since advertisements usually do not use salutations, it is possible that \emptyset salutation is an example of influence from advertising style. The more personal address terms found in sales letters such as ‘mǒumǒu xiānshēng’ (Mr + surname) and ‘guǐ dānwèi fùzé tóngzhǐ’ (person in charge) were not very frequently used. As noted earlier, the writers seem to prefer company names to indicate an invitation to the whole company.

4.1.3 The linguistic forms used as closing moves

Closings are often written in honorific or respectful forms. Consider the following frequently used form as an example:

jǐngqǐng guānglín
respectfully-invite come (H)
It is an honour to invite you.

The above closing is related to an invitation as indicated in the term ‘jǐngqǐng’ (respectfully invite), and is often used in invitations. It is written in honorific form, thus showing more respect to the reader than those without. This is a feature typical of an invitation in which the writer is expected to show high respect to the reader, and in this way, this kind of closing can help achieve the purpose of relationship building between the writer and the reader as inviter and invitee.

Similar respect can also be found in forms of well-wishes, such as ‘zhù dàān’ (wish you good health). These well-wishes are in fact representative of using ‘shangxing’ (the subordinate writing to the superior) words to indicate high respect. This usage of ‘shangxing’ lexical items in ‘pingxing’ genres has already been discussed in the last chapter as a means of showing respect. Although there are no fixed rules about what honorific forms can be used in the closing, a professional writer with appropriate world schemata would know the general guidelines and meet the level of respect required by an invitation.

The signature often takes the form of the company’s name, and the date is written at the end of the letter: a common practice in Chinese letter writing as noted in the last chapter.

4.2 Analysing the content moves

This section analyses content moves in the top-down processing of moves, steps and linguistic forms and discusses how these levels work together to realise communicative purposes. As discussed earlier, six content moves can be found in the corpus: introducing the exhibition, inviting the reader, establishing credentials, describing the exhibition, offering incentives and providing registration details. All these moves will be discussed in detail below:

4.2.1 Introducing the exhibition

Move 1, introducing the exhibition, is frequently the opening section. Among the twenty letters, nineteen (95%) begin with ‘introducing the exhibition’, only one letter (Letter 2) begins with ‘describing the exhibited product’. This move is composed of the following steps:

Step 1 Providing background information

Step 2 Indicating background objectives

Step 3 Providing information about the exhibition

In the above steps, the first one is closely related to the second in that the first provides background information while the second relates to objectives arising from the background information. Only six letters (30%) used the first step, and it does not seem to be a very common practice. Nine letters (45%) introduced the second step. Both the first and second steps can co-occur, and are used as subordinate steps for the third step ‘providing information about the exhibition’. The third step is the most important in this move, because it introduces the main activities, and includes the name of the exhibition, and the place and time it is to be held. Therefore, all the letters included this information, and eleven letters (55%) began with Step 3. This move is mainly linked to the purpose of informing the reader about the activities. At the same time, it can also be related to other purposes such as attracting attention or interest, and relationship building. The linguistic forms used in the three steps of this move can be exemplified in the following example from the corpus:

(1) sūběi dīqū de qìchē gōngyè xùnměng fāzhǎn. (2) wèile mǎnzú
north-Jiangsu district GNE vehicle industry quick develop in-order-to meet

guǎngdà kèhù duì chēliàng gēnghuàn, tiānzhǐ de shíjǐ xūyào, tígāo
 broad customer for vehicle replace add GNE practical need raise
 guǐ chǎng chǎnpǐn zhīmíng dù, bǐng yǐ juéjuè yōushǐ
 your (H) company product well-known degree and with absolute advantage
 zhànlǐng sūběi shìchǎng, (3) wǒ gōngsī jiāng yú 95 nián 4 yuè 18
 occupy north-Jiangsu market I company will in 95 year April 18
 rì jǔbàn ‘jiātǐng jiàochē zhǎnxiāohuǐ’.

date hold family vehicle exhibition

(1) The economic situation is developing rapidly in the northern districts of Jiangsu.

(2) In order to meet the needs of the vast numbers of customers to replace and buy vehicles, to raise the profile of your products, and to enable your product to occupy a market place in the northern districts of Jiangsu, (3) our company is to hold the

‘Family Vehicle Exhibition’ on April 18, 1995.

In the above example, numerals have been added to indicate the three steps in this move.

Step 1, providing background information, talks about the development of the vehicle industry. This step provides some contextual background information relevant to the exhibition. The adjective ‘xùnmǎng’ (rapidly) is used to indicate the urgent market need, in this context, for holding a vehicle exhibition.

Step 2, ‘indicating background objectives’ is not related to the direct objectives or purposes the exhibition tries to achieve, but rather to general objectives that arise from the background information. This step is introduced by the purpose connective ‘wèile’ (in order to) in this example. As discussed in the last chapter, this is an important connective to indicate that an important point is coming up in the main clause. In the ‘wèile’ clause, two background objectives are introduced: the first one is related to meeting the customers’ need to buy cars, and the second to the reader’s need to sell vehicles at the exhibition. These two background objectives can fulfil several functions. Firstly, the writer attaches importance to the exhibition by stressing these objectives. Secondly, the writer tries to attract the reader’s attention by mentioning the reader’s product advantage in the vehicle market.

Step 3 provides information about the exhibition by giving details such as the organiser, the name of the exhibition and the time it is to be held. The format of this step is quite fixed, because it is mainly informational.

4.2.2 Inviting the reader

Move 2, inviting the reader, can be seen as composed of one step, and is employed by all the twenty letters. The position of this move varies. It is placed either after the introduction to the exhibition or after the description of it. This move is characterised by the use of respectful and honorific linguistic forms. When an appropriate degree of respect is used, the invited will feel honoured. It is felt that the more respectful the invitation is, the more likely it will be accepted. Here the Chinese concept of ‘face’ comes into play. There is a common saying that ‘*nǐ jìng wǒ yī chǐ, wǒ jìng nǐ yī zhàng*’ (If you respect me one inch, I will respect you ten times more). So sometimes, the feeling of being honoured by others may act as a reason for the reader to accept an invitation. Therefore the polite use of language is very important here, and is also consistent with forms used for the formulaic moves.

In this move, the writers often use verbs relating to ‘inviting’ especially the verb ‘*yāoqǐng*’ (invite), which can be used both as a verb and a noun. According to the Modern Chinese Dictionary (Shekeyuan, 1984:1340), the word ‘*yāo*’ (invite) alone can indicate the meaning of ‘inviting’. The word ‘*qǐng*’, which also means ‘please’, is used here as a verb meaning ‘ask or request courteously’. These two characters have similar meanings. The combination of ‘*yāo*’ (invite) plus ‘*qǐng*’ (ask politely) makes the act of inviting respectful and formal, and it is used to formally invite guests. However, the writer can make ‘*yāoqǐng*’ more polite or respectful by combining it with other modifiers. For example, ‘*chéngyǐ*’ meaning ‘sincere’ is often used to modify ‘*yāoqǐng*’ to indicate the writer’s sincerity:

chéngyǐ yāoqǐng guǐ gōngsī pàiyuán qiánwǎng cānguān.
sincerely invite your (H) company send-people come visit
We sincerely invite your company to come and visit.

There are three other compound verbs used which express a similar meaning to ‘chéngyǐ yāoqǐng’ (invite): ‘tèyāo’ or ‘tecǐ yāoqǐng’ (specially invite), ‘jǐngqǐng’ (respectfully invite) and ‘gōngqǐng’ (respectfully invite). As indicated by the underlined part, all three compound verbs are related to the verb ‘yāoqǐng’. The compound ‘tèyāo’, composed of the modifier ‘tè’ (special) and ‘yāo(qǐng)’ (invite), means ‘specially invite’ and indicates that the writer takes the invitation as something special. ‘Jǐngqǐng’ is composed of the modifier ‘jǐng’ (respectfully), and ‘(yāo)qǐng’. The third compound verb ‘gōngqǐng’ is composed of the modifier ‘gōng’ (respectfully), and ‘(yāo)qǐng’, and has the similar level of respect to ‘jǐngqǐng’. All this shows that these verbs relating to the act of invitation are related to respect to the reader, which matches the level of respect of the letter in general.

The above four forms of ‘inviting’ can be used interchangeably, as they all endeavour to show a high level of respect. All of them were found in the corpus: nine letters use ‘tèyāo’ (specially invite), five letters use ‘jǐngqǐng’ or ‘gōngqǐng’ (respectfully invite) and three letters use ‘chéngyǐ yāoqǐng’ (sincerely invite).

Inviting can also be expressed by the verb ‘huānyíng’ (welcome). This word is less formal than ‘yāoqǐng’, but can be used to indicate the hospitality of the writer. The association of the two concepts of ‘huānyíng’ (welcome) and ‘kè’ (guest) or ‘péng’ (friend) is expressed in the following example:

huānyíng gèwèi dào wēnzhou zuò kè, yǒu péng zǐ yuǎnfāng
welcome everyone come Wenzhou be guest have friend from far
lái, bù yǐ luò hū?
come not also happy QM
(We) welcome everyone to come to Wenzhou to be our guests! How happy we will
be if we have friends coming from far away!

In the above example, the second sentence is taken from the words of Confucius, and this has become a common saying in Chinese used to welcome a friend. This saying is written as a rhetorical question, as the classical question marker ‘hū’ indicates a question. As discussed

earlier in this chapter, ‘friendship’ in sales invitations has its own connotation. Here it is used to refer to the reader as a guest, rather than as a casual friend.

In the corpus, six letters (20%) use the form ‘huānyíng’ (welcome) in the letter. Among them, three use this form to reinforce the invitation, in addition to the other verbs relating to inviting.

The third type of verb used to indicate the speech act of invitation is ‘qǐng cānjiā’ (please participate) and ‘wàng cānjiā’ (hope you will participate). These two expressions are used in one letter each (10% of the corpus). ‘Qǐng cānjiā’ (please participate) is an imperative sentence plus the softener ‘qǐng’ (please). The softener ‘qǐng’ is often used as a request as discussed in the last chapter. It is also possible for an invitation to use this form. However, ‘qǐng’ indicates a lower level of respect compared with ‘yāoqǐng’ (invite). ‘Wàng cānjiā’ (hope you will participate) is a declarative sentence with the subject omitted. ‘Wàng’ (hope) is also found to be used in sales letters to indicate a request (see Chapter 4), and has also been found by Kirkpatrick (1991) frequently to raise a request in Chinese request letters. As noted earlier, an invitation differs from a request, and especially Chinese invitations tend to use forms relating to high respect. ‘Wàng’, therefore, as a form of request would indicate a lower level of respect than ‘yāoqǐng’ (invite). When it comes to invitations, this form does not sound appropriately respectful, and does not meet the level of respect an invitation usually requires. Neither ‘qǐng’ nor ‘wàng’ seem to indicate the appropriate level of respect or hospitality. It is possible that because of this, these two expressions were not commonly used.

Another relevant point relating to this move is the phenomenon of inviting the reader more than once. One letter repeats the invitation as follows:

(1) jǐngqǐng guǐ dānwèi jièshí pàiyuán cānjiā shènghuǐ.

respect-invite your (H) company then send-person participate grand-exhibition
(We) respectfully invite your (H) company to attend this grand exhibition.

(2) jiéchéng huānyíng guānglín.

wholehearted welcome presence (H)

(We) wholeheartedly welcome (your) presence (H).

In the above example, the first invitation is expressed by the verbal phrase ‘jǐngqǐng’ and the second by another verbal phrase ‘jiéchéng huānyíng’. Notice both types of inviting tend to use honorific forms such as ‘guǐ’ (your H) and ‘guānglín’ (presence H) to match the respect and politeness of this genre.

Five letters (25%) invited the reader more than once, and this phenomenon is worthy of note as it is related to a typical cultural value. Although in form this repetition is a kind of redundancy, if it is put in the Chinese cultural context, it does not represent redundancy at all. In everyday conversation, people often repeat an invitation in order to express hospitality. The more times the host repeats the invitation, the more hospitality and sincerity are exhibited. If the host invites the guest only once, the guest may think that the host is only following some kind of ritual and does not mean to invite. If the host insists on the invitation again and again, the addressee will take it as a sincere invitation and know that the host means what s/he is saying. Although the written form is different from oral invitations, repeated inviting appears to be influenced by this ritualistic practice. According to Chen (1991:106), repetition in invitations is sometimes necessary because it emphasises the invitation. He further explains that repeating the invitation again and again indicates the writer’s cordiality and sincerity towards the reader. The repetition of the invitation is, therefore, not redundant.

4.2.3 Establishing credentials

Move 3, establishing credentials, does not seem to be a frequent one, and only five letters (25%) in the corpus employed this move. The reason for its infrequent use may be that the focus of the introduction is not always related to one company’s products, but to the products at the exhibition from various companies. It is very hard to give credentials for all the producers of these products. In fact, all the letters that have this move are about exhibiting the products of one particular company. The position of this move seems to be rather fixed, with four instances placed after ‘introducing the exhibition’, and only one

placed before ‘providing registration details’. The linguistic forms of this move are quite similar to those used in sales letters. For example, one letter writes:

XXX jīqì zhìzào chǎng shì quánguó zuǐdà de jīqì
XXX machinery make company be all-country biggest GNE machinery
zhìzào chǎng zhī yī.
make company GNE one
XXX Machinery Co. is one of the biggest throughout the country.

The credentials in the above example are established by indicating the scale of the company in the forms of ‘zuǐdà ... zhī yī’ (one of the biggest). These credentials can be seen as indicating high productivity as the company has such a large scale. This factor may attract the readers’ interest.

4.2.4 Describing the exhibition

Move 4, describing the exhibition, is often placed after the move of introducing the exhibition. Only one letter (Letter 2, to be discussed in Section 6 of this chapter) began with this move. This move seems to be important since all twenty letters employed it. It is composed of the following two steps:

- Step 1 Providing essential details of the exhibition
- Step 2 Evaluation of the exhibition or the exhibited products

Of the above two steps, Step 1 provides details about the scale, the participants and exhibited products and Step 2 gives a positive evaluation of the exhibition. They can be seen as related to the major purposes of giving positive appraisals and persuading the reader. The persuasion is achieved mainly through describing the exhibition from different perspectives and giving positive evaluations.

For example, Step 1 is realised in the following linguistic forms in one letter:

- (1) cānzhǎn dānwèi duō: bāokuò qǐchē shēngcǎn chǎngjiā, gè
participate-exhibition company many including car make company every

dà jīngxiāo dānwèi, guówài qìchē chǎngshāng zhù zhōngguó
big sell company foreign car company-salesman live China
dàibiǎo jīgòu.

representative agency

(2) yàngchē zhǎnshì yǔ xiāoshòu bǐngxíng.

sample-car exhibite and sell hold-together

(1) Many companies will participate in the exhibition, including all the car-producing companies, all the sales companies, and foreign car-sales agencies in China.

(2) Sample cars will be exhibited and will be sold at the exhibition at the same time.

In the above example, the details include the scale of the exhibition in the first sentence, and the activities in the second. The first sentence shows a common way of writing this step. The writer proceeds in a deductive manner by giving the general idea first which is ‘dānwèi duō’ (many participants), and then giving the detailed information to support this point. The term ‘bāokuò’ (include) is often used to introduce the items to be listed, the kinds of participating companies in this example. It can also be used to introduce varieties of products as well. ‘Bǐngxíng’ in the second sentence is a concise way of saying ‘to hold together’ more than one activity. The writer of this letter thus includes two kinds of detail, which can be related to the strength of the exhibition. Other letters in the corpus also tend to include details that show their strengths and this is what the reader may be interested in. Some letters emphasise the large scale of the exhibition, and some emphasise the products.

The second step ‘evaluating the exhibition’ can be embedded in the first step, as in the case of ‘many companies will participate in the exhibition’ in the above example. As noted in the last chapter, a similar kind of embedding is also found in ‘evaluating the product’ in sales letters. This step can also be expressed by an individual sentence as shown in the following example, which is also the third item in the above letter:

(3) guīmó dà, dàngcǐ gāo, fúshèmiàn guǎng, yǐngxiǎnglǐ qiáng, gè

scale great grade high radiate-area wide influence-force strong every

dà xīnwén jǐgòu tōnglǐ hézuò, shèhuì xiàoyǐng jùdà.

big news agency joint-effort cooperate society effect immense

(3) The scale is big. The grade is high. The influence is wide-spread and strong. All the newspapers will make a joint effort to advertise (the exhibition). The social effect is immense.

In the above example, five adjectives are used: dà (great), gāo (high), guǎng (wide), qiáng (strong), and jùdà (immense). This can be seen as an example of using the formal schema of a series of adjectives as a particular kind of lexical boost in two different ways to evaluate the exhibition. The first four adjectives can also be seen as two pairs of phrases in parallel. The first pair are phrases of three characters with the adjectives ‘dà’, and ‘gāo’ placed at the end, and the second pair are phrases of four characters with ‘guǎng’ and ‘qiáng’ placed at the end of each phrase. As a whole, the use of adjectives in the above example can also indicate an end focus where an adjective of intensified degree, such as ‘jùdà’ (immense) is placed.

Another type of frequently used lexical boost (see last chapter) is the superlative degree of adjectives. For example:

(zìdòng diāokèjī) gòuzào zuǐ jiāngù, tíjī zuǐ xiǎo.

(automatic carver) make most solid volume most small

(The carvers are) the most solidly built and the smallest in volume.

The superlative underlined is used to refer to the good quality of the products. The employment of the superlative degree in ‘zuǐ jiāngù’ (the most solid) and ‘zuǐ xiǎo’ (the smallest) help to make the products attractive to the reader, and so nine letters in the corpus use this strategy.

In addition, ‘sǐzǐ jiégòu’ (four-character expressions), which have already been discussed in the last chapter, are also found in sales invitations, to give positive evaluations either of the exhibition, or of the exhibited products. For example, one letter describes the exhibition as:

gāi zhǎnlánhuì shì shípǐn shāng qiàttán jiāoyì de lǐxiǎng chǎngshuǒ
this exhibition be food businessmen talk trade GNE ideal place
shì guójìxìng de màoyì shènghuì.

be international GNE trade grand-meeting

This exhibition is an ideal place for business people from food companies to hold trade talks. It is a grand gathering of international trade.

Two four-character expressions (underlined) are used in the above example to describe the exhibition. ‘Lǐxiǎng chǎngshuǒ’ is a noun phrase made of up of an adjective ‘lǐxiǎng’ and a noun ‘chǎngshuǒ’, where the adjective gives a positive evaluation of the noun. The other four-character expression ‘màoyì shènghuì’ is also a noun phrase. However, embedded in this expression there is another noun phrase ‘shènghuì’ (grand meeting), and it is the adjective ‘shèng’ (grand) that gives a positive evaluation.

Another letter describes the exhibited product of electrical sockets:

běn chǎngpǐng jiégòu xīnyǐng dú tè, pōjù mèilǐ, guónèi
this product making new unique quite-have glamour inside-country
dúchuàng.

original-create

This product has a new and unique form of manufacture, and glamour. (It is) an original creation in our country.

The above example is a topic-comment structure, the topic is ‘běn chǎngpǐng’ (this product) and the comment is the rest of the sentence describing what the topic, the product is like. In the comment section, the subject is ‘jiégòu’ (form of manufacture). All three four-character expressions (underlined) are used to describe the subject ‘jiégòu’. Although these expressions have different internal structures, such as ‘xīnyǐng dú tè’ (new and unique) being an adjective phrase and ‘pōjù mèilǐ’ (have glamour) being a verb phrase, they play a

very similar role in giving a positive evaluation of the product. It is the adjectives and adverbs, such as ‘xīnyǐng dú tè’ (new and unique), ‘pō’ (very) and ‘dú chuàng’ (unique creation) that have the lion’s share in expressing the positive attitudes of the writer.

4.2.5 Offering incentives

The fourth move, ‘offering incentives’, does not seem to be a frequent move and only six letters (30%) employed it. It is composed of the following two steps:

Step 1 Offering benefits the exhibition may bring

Setp 2 Offering a special rate

A letter can either have Step 1 or Step 2, or have both. When they co-occur, they follow the above sequence. The first step is related to the benefits the writer promises to the reader, and is often placed after ‘introducing the exhibition’. Take the following as an example:

tóngshí hái jiāng zǔzhī guónèiwài jìshù jiāoliú
at-the-same-time also will organise inside-outside-country technology exchange
hé yōuzhǐ chǎnpǐn píngshěn yǔ tuījiàn huódòng.
and good-quality product appraise-approve and recommend activity
At the same time, (we) will also organise other activities such as national and
international technology exchange programs, exhibited product appraisals and
recommendations.

In the above example, the verb phrase ‘hái jiāng zǔzhǐ’ (will also organise) introduces other activities the writer will organise. These activities can be seen in the analysis as incentives, because they are not really related to exhibiting the products, but closely related to further opportunities to obtain possible benefits if the reader attends the exhibition. The above example refers to technology exchange opportunities, and opportunities to win an award for the exhibited products. Technology exchange may be an incentive because readers may want to upgrade their equipment. In addition, appraisals may also be an incentive, and the reader’s exhibited product may have the opportunity to win a prize at the exhibition.

The second step is related to a special offer for the registration fee, and is often included in the move of providing registration details towards the end of the letter. For example:

10-20 rén de dàibiǎotuán, dànduǐ yīrén miǎnjiāo
10-20 people GNE delegation group-leader one-person exempt-pay
huǐwùfèi.
exhibition-fee

For a delegation of 10-20 people, the group leader is exempt from the exhibition fee.

The important elements in the above example is ‘miǎnjiāo’ (to be exempt) which is a way of indicating a special offer to delegations of a certain scale.

‘Offering benefits the exhibition may bring’ and ‘offering a special rate’ are placed in separate places, in letters that have both of these steps. Therefore in these letters, the move, offering incentives, indicates a splitting tendency, which is quite similar to that of sales letters as discussed in the last chapter.

4.2.6 Providing registration details

The sixth move, providing registration details, is placed after the invitation towards the end of the letter. All twenty letters provided specific information about the exhibition relating to time, place and registration procedures. This information is of practical importance if the reader decides to attend the exhibition. Therefore it is closely related to the purpose of informing the reader about the exhibition. In addition, other purposes such as encouraging further communication can also be involved. This move is composed of the following two steps:

- Step 1 Giving registration details
- Step 2 Giving further contact details

The first step, giving registration details, is very much informational. Although some information about the exhibition may have already been given earlier on, this step provides more details and may also cover other information such as the registration fee,

accommodation information and contact details. For example, one letter introduces the registration fee in this step as:

měiwèi cānhuǐ dàibiǎo shōu huǐwùfèi 380 yuán.
every-Class. participate-exhibition representative charge registration-fee 380 yuan.
The registration fee for each participant is 380 yuan.

As shown in this example, the introduction is basically informational and gives precise details about the amount of money needed. In a similar way, the writer includes other necessary information such as telephone and fax numbers and so on. However, while some letters provide very detailed information, as in the example above, others provide only minimal contact details.

The second step is related to the first in that it is also about contacting the writer. The second step appears to be optional and only five letters (25%) include it. For example, one letter expresses this step in the following way:

rènhe shíhòu nín jūn kě huòdé bǐxǔ de guǎnggào xīngxī
any time you (H) all can obtain necessary GNE advertise information
zīliào hě nín gǎn xīngqù de wèngtí de xiàngjīn dǎfù.
material and you (H) feel interest GNE question GNE detail answer
You (H) can obtain at any time (our) catalogue and other information you need and
a detailed response to the questions you are interested in.


In the above example, the writer uses the ‘you’ approach. As discussed in Chapter 4, this is a means of speaking from the reader’s perspective. Here the writer addresses the reader’s need for further information such as ‘guǎnggào xīngxī’ (catalogue). The time adverbial ‘rènhe shíhòu’ (at any time) even stresses the continuously available service the writer can offer. In addition, the second person pronoun is written in the honorific form to indicate respect. This is a good example of using formal schemata to express this step in order to achieve the purpose of encouraging further communication.

4.2.7 Summary of the content moves

As discussed above, some moves appear to be optional, while others appear to be obligatory and exist in all or nearly all of the twenty letter corpus. The moves of introducing the exhibition, inviting the reader, describing the exhibition, and providing registration details can be considered as obligatory as all the letters in the corpus employed them. The other two moves of establishing credentials and offering incentives appear to be optional, because less than half of the letters in the corpus employed them.

Some steps, too, appear to be obligatory and some optional. Steps such as providing information about the exhibition, providing essential details of the exhibition, evaluating the exhibition, inviting the reader and providing registration details can be considered to be obligatory to the relevant moves. In the first move, introducing the exhibition, for example, the step of providing information about the exhibition is very important in determining this move as it contributes most to achieving the relevant purpose. The other two steps, providing background information and indicating background objectives, are only subordinate steps which help to express the main step, and therefore, they appear to be optional. The same is true of 'providing essential details of the exhibition' and 'evaluating the exhibition'. These two steps are important in presenting the move of describing the exhibition. Similarly, 'giving registration details' is important in that this step can encode the move of providing registration details and provide essential information for this move.

In addition, in the twenty letter corpus, there is a general tendency for the moves to be arranged in the following sequence, although some letters may have a slightly different sequence:

- 
- (1) Introducing the exhibition
 - (2) Establishing credentials
 - (3) Inviting the reader
 - (4) Description of the exhibition
 - (5) Offering incentives
 - (6) Inviting the reader
 - (7) Providing registration details

‘Introducing the exhibition’ is usually placed at the beginning of the letter and, therefore, has a quite fixed position. The position of ‘establishing credentials’ is relatively fixed, and is often placed after ‘introducing the exhibition’. ‘Describing the exhibition’ is often in the middle of the letter and placed either after ‘introducing the exhibition’ or ‘inviting the reader’. However, this sequence is only relatively fixed, because one letter places ‘describing the exhibition’ at the beginning of the letter. ‘Providing registration details’ is always placed at the end of the letter and thus has a quite fixed position in the information sequencing.

The position of ‘inviting the reader’ is rather flexible as indicated above in (3) and (6). Eight letters placed the invitation soon after the section of ‘introducing the exhibition’. The reason for this position may be that the writers follow the style of an invitation. In an invitation, the inviting section is often placed after the activity is introduced. In this way, the invitation is placed in a prominent position. Fourteen letters placed ‘inviting the reader’ after ‘describing the exhibition’. The possible reason for this position is that the writers take ‘inviting the reader’ as calling for action for the exhibition, for this position is similar to soliciting a response in sales letters. Two letters included inviting in both positions, which means they invited the reader more than once. In fact, three other letters also invited the reader more than once, but the second invitation was placed after ‘describing the exhibition’.

5 Questionnaire results and interviews relating to the top-down processing

As noted earlier in this chapter, although the writing practice of sales invitations is very close to textbook advice in regard to formulaic moves, there is a gap between these two sources in regard to communicative purposes. In order to further explore this finding, a questionnaire and interviews were administered among enterprise managers and business writing students (see Appendix 2). The purpose was to see if there were differences in the views of these two groups on the communicative purpose of sales invitations. If so, did these differences affect the opinions of these native speakers about the various levels of the text?

In order to answer the above two questions, the following three levels will be examined. First, the highest level of the text, the communicative purposes, will be examined to find whether the two groups have different understandings. Second, the formulaic moves

will be studied in a top-down manner. At the level of linguistic forms, only salutations are discussed as an example of use for ease of analysis.

5.1 Questionnaire results and interviews on communicative purposes

This section will examine the native speakers' understanding of communicative purposes. Only three communicative purposes are examined in the questionnaire (see Appendix 2): establishing relationships with the reader, attracting the reader's interest, and persuading the reader. These purposes can alternatively be called relationship building, attracting interest and persuasiveness. These are also the purposes that may be in conflict and this point will be discussed in the analysis of the interviews. However, they do not necessarily represent all the major purposes. For example, inviting the reader is very important, but this purpose is not included in the questionnaire because it is such a clear-cut purpose for an invitation. In the questionnaire, both groups were asked to grade the three purposes as 1 (very important), 2 (quite important), 3 (not so important), and 4 (not important). The results for each group are shown in Figure 9 and Figure 10 below:

Figure 9. The students' preferences (%)

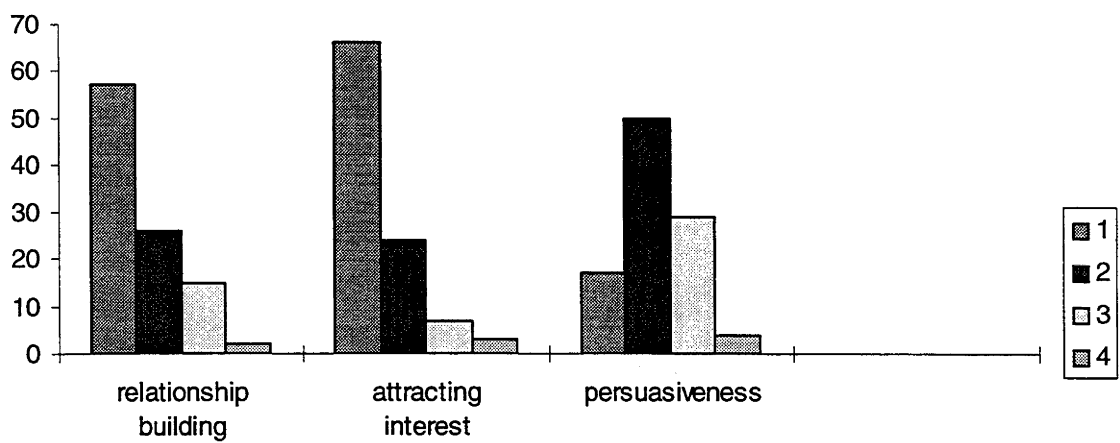
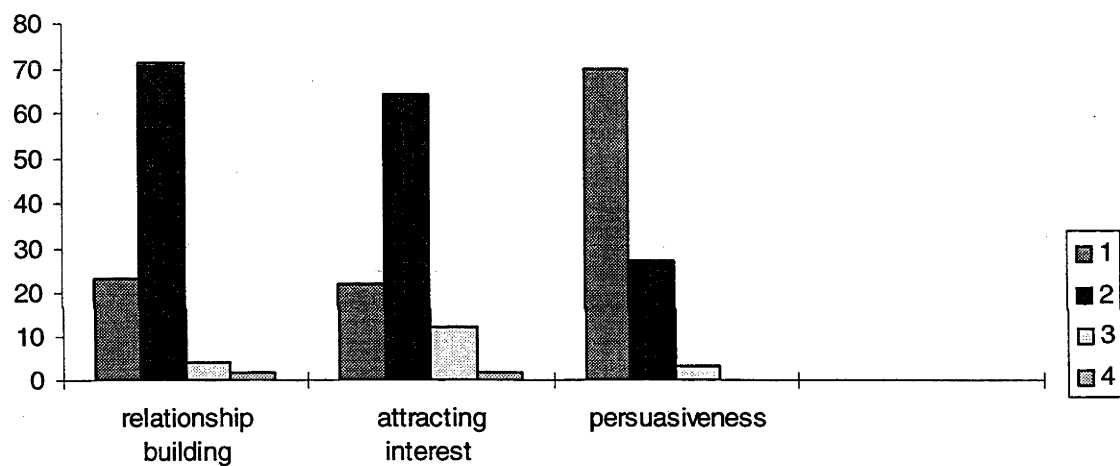


Figure 10. The managers' preferences (%)



NOTE: In the above two diagrams, the columns numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 stand for the four grades. The vertical axis shows the percentage of each group who chose each grade of the three communicative purposes.

Figure 9 and Figure 10 show that the only similarity is that both of the groups considered 'relationship building' and 'attracting interest' important. Very few respondents chose the 'not so important' or 'not important' degrees. However, they differed in their rating of importance of these two purposes. Over half of the students considered them very important, while only a quarter of the managers did. Most managers (71% and 64% respectively) rated 'relationship building' and 'attracting interest' quite important. They also

differed in grading 'persuasiveness' with only 17% of the students vs. 70% of the managers preferring the 'very important' degree. In fact, the students' grading of 'persuasiveness' was quite spread out, and 29% of them rated it as 'not so important'. The students' preferences for 'persuasiveness' were quite similar to those in sales letters as discussed in the last chapter.

Follow-up interviews were undertaken and the results will be discussed here. As shown above, the two groups had different understandings of the communicative purposes. The following will analyse their views in order to determine why such a difference occurred.

The students seemed to place equal importance on both 'relationship building' and 'attracting interest'. More than half of them rated 'relationship building' 'very important'. They explained that sales invitations were a very important type of 'liyixin' (letters of etiquette), and so the letter should have 'relationship building' as a major purpose, as indicated in the textbooks. On the other hand, they further explained that the letter was related to advertising the exhibition and should place equal importance on attracting the reader's interest. The students who made this choice thought that for a sales invitation, if the writer could make the reader interested, the letter had already achieved its major aim. This was also rated highly by students in the interviews on sales letters.

For 'persuasiveness', the students' choices included all four degrees with 'quite important' much higher than 'very important' (50%:17%), and 33% for 'not very important' and 'not important'. Generally speaking they seemed to place less importance on this purpose. As one student argued, "Although the purpose of a sales invitation is to invite the reader to the exhibition, the writer should place more importance on 'attracting interest' than on 'persuasiveness'. If the reader was interested, s/he would respond to the letter and inquire about the exhibition". According to the students, one of the most important reasons for attending the exhibition was interest in the exhibition.

In sum, it seems that the students have some difficulty balancing the three purposes examined. According to them, 'establishing relationships' and 'attracting interest' were the most important purposes. As discussed earlier, sales invitations belong to 'gongwen' (official letters) and should not be treated as a pure 'liyixin' (letters of etiquette), therefore 'establishing relationship' is not a decisive factor for the reader in accepting the invitation. If

the writer were to over-emphasise this purpose the reader could even lose interest in reading the letter.

The managers, on the other hand, seemed to have a better understanding of these purposes and thus could cope with the relationship among them in a more efficient way. In the first place, they preferred only one focus among the three purposes, which was 'persuasiveness'. The other two purposes were only taken as subordinate to this one. With this principle as a guide, they expressed their views as follows.

They thought that 'establishing relationships' was no doubt an important purpose, as one obvious purpose of an invitation was to invite the reader as a guest. However, compared with 'persuasiveness', it should be treated as of less importance, because 'building a relationship' could be seen as subordinate to 'persuasiveness'. As one manager explained, "Why do you want to establish a host-guest relationship with the reader? Because you want him/her to attend the exhibition." Therefore 'relationship building' was seen as paving the way or setting the right atmosphere for 'persuasiveness'.

The managers also regarded 'attracting interest' as a secondary purpose as compared with 'persuasiveness'. More than half (64%) of the managers chose the 'quite important' degree for 'attracting interest'. Managers who made this choice thought that it was appropriate to regard 'attracting interest' as 'quite important', instead of 'very important', because the aim of this letter was not to attract the readers' interest, but to invite the reader to come to the exhibition. Getting interested was only an initial step, and did not mean that the reader would attend the exhibition.

Most of the managers (70%) preferred the 'very important' degree for 'persuasiveness'. Managers who made this choice thought that since the ultimate purpose of writing a sales invitation was to persuade the reader to attend the exhibition, the writer should not only attract the interest of the reader, but also, more importantly, should persuade the reader to come to the exhibition. Therefore, they explained that if the sales invitation only tried to attract the reader's interest, it could be in conflict with 'persuasiveness'. For example, the writer could include something very attractive to the reader's interest, such as how much profit some exhibited products can bring, but fail to provide supporting details. Thus 'attracting interest' would be achieved at the expense of 'persuasiveness', and could result in the reader not being convinced. Then it was likely that

the letter would end up with a rejection. As one manager commented, “The effectiveness of a sales invitation largely lies in its persuasiveness. Without it, it is unlikely that the readers will attend the exhibition.” As with their views on sales letters, the managers thought that advertising language without supporting facts would not be persuasive. They felt strongly that it was important to include essential facts such as the use of modern technology and detailed descriptions of the exhibition to meet the needs of the reader, because these could be factors which would influence the readers’ decision.

5.2 The use of formulaic components

This section will discuss the questionnaire results and interviews in relation to the lower levels of text: the moves, steps and linguistic forms for the formulaic components. The purpose is to determine whether the difference in the native speakers’ understandings of communicative purposes would lead to different views at these levels of the text. Although this is by no means a complete list of native speakers’ responses to the whole text, it will reflect the general trends of their preferences.

The first questionnaire item focuses on the native speakers’ preferences for the use of headings, salutations, greetings, and well-wishes. The results are shown in the following table:

Table 9. Native speakers’ preferences for formulaic components

Responses	Heading		Salutation		Greeting		Well-wishes	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Students %	100	0	95	5	67	33	84	16
Managers %	97	3	100	0	13	87	90	10

It can be seen that in Table 9, the two groups indicated almost no difference in preferences for headings, salutations and well-wishes. However, they differed in their preferences for greetings, and a lot more students preferred the use of greetings: 67 vs. 13. The managers’ preference for greetings was closer to the actual practices found in the corpus.

Since both groups agreed upon the use of headings, salutations and well-wishes as necessary formulaic components for sales invitations, follow-up interviews focused on the use of greetings. Most of the students (67%) insisted on the use of greetings. Their

preferences seemed to be influenced by textbook advice. As noted earlier, textbooks tend to categorise sales invitations as ‘liyixin’ (letters of etiquette) or ‘shejiaoxin’ (letters of social contact) instead of ‘gongwen’ (official letters), and greetings are used as a strategy for relationship building (Lu et al., 1993:189). Evidence of this influence could be seen in the interviews with the students when they explained that as a ‘shejiaoxin’ (letters of social contact), sales invitation should include greetings to indicate courtesy to the reader.

In contrast to the students’ responses, most of the managers (87%) preferred not to use greetings. They thought that greetings, as a formulaic component, could be used in some types of business letters, such as sales letters, but were not appropriate for sales invitations. One manager provided the following reasons: the purpose of using greetings was to build up relationships with the reader. Inviting could also help establish a host-guest relationship with the reader in a sales invitation. Since the relationship had already been well-established in a sales invitation, there was no need to use greetings.

These differences in the preferences for greetings indicates, to a certain degree, that their different understandings of communicative purposes may lead to a difference in the choices for moves. The students’ preference for greetings shows that they are very conscious of the importance of ‘relationship building’, which is consistent with textbook influence. The managers’ preferences not to use greetings is also consistent with their preference for ‘relationship building’ as only a subordinate purpose. Thus they claimed that the key emphasis should be on persuasiveness, although ‘relationship building’ was quite important.

5.3 The preferred use of linguistic forms for salutations

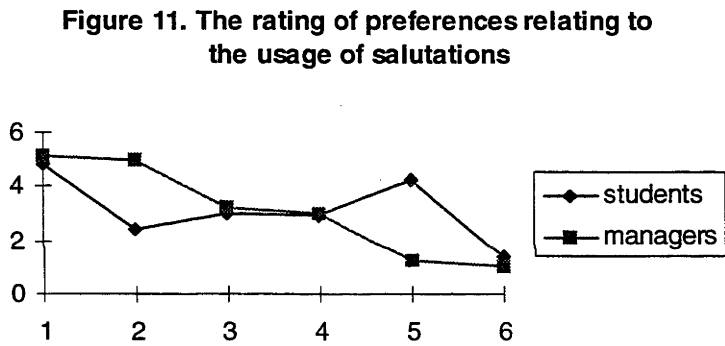
This section examines the appropriateness of salutations as a typical example of using linguistic forms. The native speakers in each group were asked to grade (between grades 1-6) the salutations found the corpus. The highest mean score indicates the most appropriate, and the lowest, the least appropriate as shown in the following table¹²:

¹² Only the translated version of these forms is provided, the original forms were in 4.1.2 of this chapter.

Table 10. The results of rating (mean score) relating to the preferences of salutations

Salutation	Students	Rank	Managers	Rank
1 company name	4.85	1	5.09	1
2 respected reader	2.43	5	4.95	2
3 Mr + surname	3.01	3	3.2	3
4 person in charge	2.9	4	2.98	4
5 ladies and gentlemen	4.24	2	1.22	5
6 ∅ salutation	1.38	6	1.02	6

Alternatively, the results of the above rating can be shown in the following figure to indicate more clearly the difference of rating between the two groups:



Note: The vertical bar indicates the rank, while the horizontal bar indicates the forms.

The above table and figure show that the students and managers were exactly the same in rank order for the most and the least appropriate: company name ranked most appropriate, 4.85:5.09, and ∅ salutation the least appropriate, 1.38:1.02. There were only slight differences in the rating of the address terms of ‘Mr + surname’ and ‘person in charge’. The two groups mainly differed in the rating of ‘jǐng qīzhě’ (respected reader): 2.43: 4.95; and ‘nǚshìmen xiānshēngmen’ (ladies and gentlemen): 4.24:1.22. The managers’ choices, again were closer to the findings in the corpus.

In the follow-up interviews, both groups preferred to use company names. They generally thought that since sales invitations invited other companies to exhibit products, it

would be appropriate to use the company name as a salutation. The writer wanted the company to feel that the whole company was honourably invited instead of just one or two persons. Therefore both students and managers rated the specific personal address terms of 'Mr + surname' and 'person in charge' comparatively low. They explained that if the letter was written with either of these two address terms, the invitation would fail to indicate clearly at first sight whether this was a personal invitation or a company invitation. Both the students and the managers rated \emptyset salutations the least appropriate, agreeing that an invitation should have a salutation. They also agreed that salutations were especially important for invitations, because invitations represented a polite and respectful register. A letter without a salutation would not indicate appropriate politeness or respect for the reader.

The two groups differed in the use of 'respected reader' and 'ladies and gentlemen' and their views can show these two address forms were chosen to serve different purposes. The students favoured the use of 'ladies and gentlemen'. As with their views on its use for sales letters in the last chapter, they explained this address term was fashionable as well as respectful to the reader. Compared to this address term, they thought 'respected reader' sounded very old-fashioned, and its use would not be appropriate for the modern age. The use of address terms may be related to establishing image as well, such as traditional or modern. The students here raise an interesting issue about what the appropriate level of respect should be in relation to a public image.

In sharp contrast, the managers rated 'ladies and gentlemen' rather low, and 'respected reader' the second highest. They argued that although 'ladies and gentlemen' was a respectful form, it was only appropriate for public speeches, and should not be used for business letters. They even criticised the practice of using this address term in sales invitations. This opinion was similar to that given for sales letters. They preferred to use 'respected reader' for sales invitations. They explained that since sales invitations have the purpose of inviting the reader as a guest, 'respected reader' would indicate this kind of respect with the honorific modifier 'jǐng' (respected); and at the same time, this form was often used on formal occasions and could meet the level of formality of a sales invitation.

In addition, they explained, the use of 'respected reader' could be related to traditional politeness behaviour, which could help create an atmosphere to fit the formality

and elegant style of an invitation. However, the use of ‘ladies and gentlemen’ would indicate that the company wanted to use fashionable address terms only to attract the reader’s interest, and this would not be an appropriate place to do so. As one manager pointed out: “Some sales invitations do not have appropriate salutations. We should insist on the traditional use in invitation letter writing and write sales invitations in a respectful and appropriate way.” Later this manager produced a sales invitation from his file and explained that he had kept this letter for a long time because it had the appropriate formulaic components of an invitation. This provides a very good example indicating that appropriate formulaic moves can be linked to the purpose of relationship building and establishing a positive company image. This can also indicate that in business writing practice, sales invitations involve traditional use of language forms such as ‘jīng qǐzhě’ (respected reader) in order to achieve formality and high-level respect.

Generally speaking, the two groups understood sales invitations as having combined purposes of inviting and promotion. However, the students followed textbook advice and treated sales invitations as a type of ‘shejiaoxin’ (letters of social contact). They could only combine inviting and sales in a superficial way as they could not balance very well the relationships among some of the purposes. The managers better understood the twofold purposes of both inviting and advertising the exhibition in sales invitations and could balance the relationship between the communicative purposes with the focus placed on ‘persuasiveness’.

In spite of this difference, the two groups agreed that the use of most of formulaic moves, such as headings, salutations and well-wishes, were required by invitation letters, because both were aware of the function of relationship building. It appears that there is not so much difference between the two groups. However, these similarities cannot hide the differences that lie deeper in the principles the two groups followed in grading greetings, which is evidence to show that their differences in understanding communicative purposes can affect the lower level of moves.

The gap between the two groups was also revealed in their choices of linguistic forms to be used as salutations, such as ‘ladies and gentlemen’ and ‘respected reader’. Their views support our claim that their different preferences result from their different ways of understanding communicative purposes.

6 Analysing the most and the least successful letters

In this section, a detailed analysis based on the top-down model will be given of the most and least successful letters identified by the managers from the corpus. As discussed in Chapter 3, these two letters were identified by one hundred enterprise managers. In addition, ten managers were selected for interview to determine the criteria on which they judged the letters. Their views will also be provided in translation and integrated in the detailed analysis. The most successful letter was Letter 6, with a mean score of 4.05 and the least successful letter was Letter 2, with a mean score of 1.65. Both of these letters are discussed below. Only the translated versions of the two letters are provided here, as the originals can be found in Appendix 1.

6.1 The analysis of the most successful letter

Letter 6

Banking China '93
China Computer Show '93

Invitation

Respected reader,

The Chinese economy is developing rapidly. Every industry or business has to promote its technology so as to increase its competitiveness. In order to meet the needs of the industries and businesses concerned, Banking China '93 and China Computer Show '93 are to be held in December in Beijing. We sincerely invite your (H) company to participate.

This show is to be held on a grand scale. The participating companies are from more than 10 countries and districts, such as the United States, Germany, Japan, England, Singapore, Australia, Korea, Italy, Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, etc. Internationally well-known companies dealing with bank security, computers, telecommunication and automation equipment will exhibit their latest advanced equipment for financial, banking and other industrial and commercial enterprises. Enclosed in the letter are the reference materials for the participating companies.

In addition, commercial councils from Australia, Singapore, and Colorado State of the United States will also organise delegations to take part.

This show will exhibit all kinds of latest equipment and systems used in banking and financial enterprises, such as automatic tellers, cash management systems, bank-note printing machines, cash-counters, computers for bank use and their periphery equipment, area networks and their periphery equipment, networking control, stock exchange systems, financial consulting systems, international banking systems, vault doors, safes, entrance security systems, alarm systems, banking software, credit card identification or testing systems, communication systems and equipment, photo-processing systems, office automation equipment, automatic mail processing systems, etc.

Together with the exhibition of computers, instruments and meters, advanced computer technology from all over the world will be on show, including advanced atmosphere study systems and all kinds of computers, from pocket computers to large central computers, various computers for industry, calculators for specific and general use, POS retail commodity management systems, commercial tellers, various software products, computer terminals, work stations, information management systems, etc.

Through participating in this exhibition, your (H) company can meet more than seventy producers or suppliers from more than ten countries and districts, and talk about cooperative plans with them. (You are) welcome to leave your on-site exhibited products for sale.

In addition to this, many technology exchange discussions will also be held so that visitors may have a further understanding of all the participants' advanced products.

Our company sincerely invites managerial and technical representatives from your (H) company to visit (H) this Exhibition. Enclosed is an invitation card. Please

bring this card with you and go to the International Exhibition Centre to go through admission formalities.

If you need further materials, you can contact the Beijing agency of Exhibition Services Ltd:

Miss XXX

Room XX, China Exhibition Services Building. No. XX, XXX Road, XXX District, Beijing.

Telephone: XXX Fax: XXX

Wish (you) good health (H)!

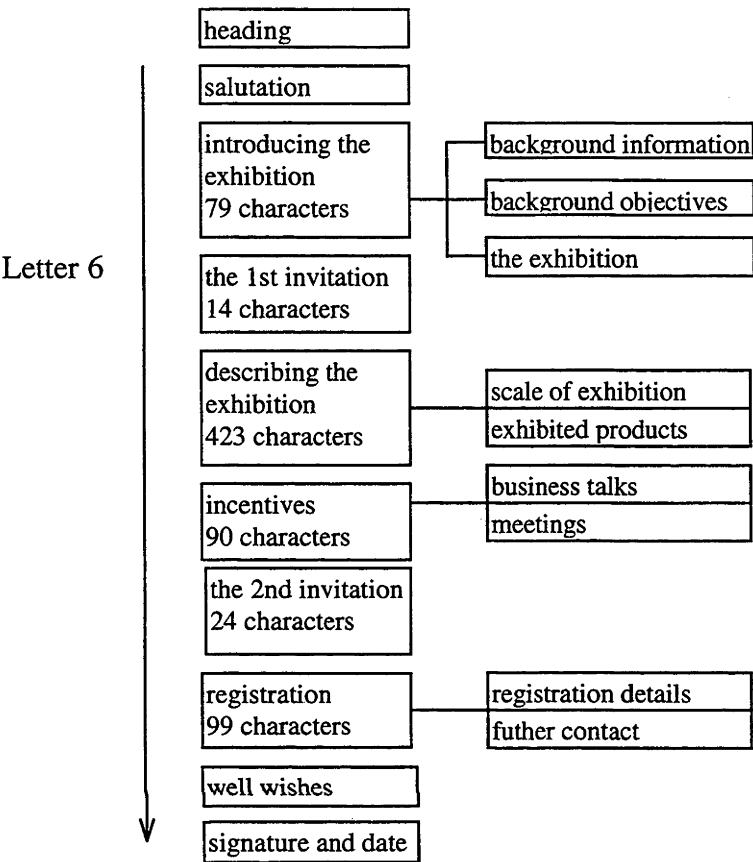
XXX Exhibition Services Ltd.

October, 1993.

Enclosed documents: a list of participating companies and the invitation card.

The structure of the letter is schematised as in the following figure.

Figure 12. The structural moves of Letter 6



The letter has a total of 726 characters

The above indicates the various moves and steps that appear in the letter. This letter has five typical content moves: (1) introducing the exhibition, (2) inviting the reader, (3) describing the exhibition, (4) offering incentives, and (5) providing registration details. The move inviting the reader is expressed twice, and therefore appears both before and after ‘describing the exhibition’ to indicate cordiality. Some of the above points are also discussed by the managers. The following are the typical comments they made on this letter.

(1) “This letter provides a good example for writing sales invitations. The reader is sincerely invited and the exhibition is well advertised. In addition, the paragraphing of the letter is good and it is easy to follow the main ideas.”

(2) “The beginning of the letter is good. The writer writes briefly about the aim of the letter. The aim is written in a practical way which is to meet the needs of the enterprises. I don’t like the flowery style which attaches grand aims to an exhibition such as ‘promoting reform for the country’, etc.”

(3) “This letter represents a sincere and formal invitation to the reader which is exactly what a sales invitation should be like. The writer uses honorific forms when referring to the reader. The writer invites the reader twice, which indicates the writer’s hospitable attitude.”

(4) “This letter provides essential details to describe the exhibition, and there is no waste of words in order to keep the reader interested. These descriptions are also very persuasive. Unlike some advertising materials which boast about the exhibition, the writer focuses on a detailed realistic depiction of the products and activities this exhibition can offer. These descriptions will help the reader work out possible opportunities for his/her own business.”

The above comments, to a large degree, reflect the managers’ knowledge structures and general expectations about writing sales invitations. The first comment gives a general impression of this letter as being well-organised. As a sales invitation, the writer should express both inviting and advertising in a clear way, and appropriate paragraphing is an efficient strategy. The second comment is about how to introduce the exhibition, such as what should be included as the background objectives for the exhibition. The third comment is about the formal and respectful register of writing sales invitations. This comment can also be seen as linked to achieving the purpose of inviting the reader as a guest. The last comment is about what is essential for the descriptions of the exhibition.

6.1.1 Detailed analysis

Firstly, the communicative purposes are realised in the following levels of moves and steps as described below:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Move 1 | Introducing the exhibition (lines 9-12) |
| | Step 1 Providing background information |
| | Step 2 Indicating background objectives |
| | Step 3 Providing information about the exhibition |

- Move 2 Inviting the reader (lines 12-13 and lines 46-47)
- Move 3 Describing the exhibition (lines 14-38)
 - Step 1 Providing essential details of the exhibition
 - Step 2 Evaluating the exhibition
- Move 4 Offering incentives (lines 39-45)
- Move 5 Providing registration details (lines 47-55)
 - Step 1 Giving registration details
 - Step 2 Giving further contact information

From the above it can be seen that the text has five moves which represent a higher level of the text. They are in turn composed of a lower level of steps. Move 1 is composed of three steps, Move 3 and Move 5 are composed of two steps each. Move 2, inviting the reader, is seen as composed of only one step but repeated in two places in the text. All the above moves and steps will be discussed further at the bottom level of relevant linguistic forms. A detailed account of this top-down relationship will be elaborated below.

(1) Move 1, introducing the exhibition (lines: 9-12), is composed of the following three steps:

- Step 1 Providing background information (lines 9-10)
- Step 2 Indicating background objectives (lines 10-11)
- Step 3 Providing information about the exhibition (lines 11-12)

The first step is realised in the following way:

zhōngguó jīngjì jí cù fā zhǎn, gè gōngshāngyè bǐxū tí gāo qí
 China economy rapid develop every industry-business must raise it
 jìshù yǐ zēngqiáng běnsēn de jǐngzhēng nénglì.

Technology in-order-to increase itself GNE compete ability
 The Chinese economy is developing rapidly. Every industry or business has to
 promote its technology so as to increase its competitiveness (lines 9-10).

The above provides background information concerning the economic context in China, which exhibits an urgent need to raise competitive ability through the forms of ‘jícù fāzhǎn’ (develop rapidly) and ‘bìxū tígāo’ (has to promote). This need can be related to the purpose of attracting the reader’s attention.

The aim of the exhibition is introduced by the connective ‘wèi(le)’ (in order to). As discussed in 4.2.1 of this chapter, this purpose connective signals background objectives. The unmarked structure is: ‘wèi(le)’ subordinate clause + main clause:

wèi mǎnzú yǒuguān gōngshāngyè zhī yāoqiú, ‘guójì
in-order-to meet concern industry-business GNE need international
yínháng jīnróng jìshù jí shèbèi zhǎnlǎnhuì jí ‘guójì
bank finance technology and equipment exhibition and international
diànnǎo, yíqì yíbiǎo zhǎnlǎnhuì’ jiāng yú shíèr yuèfèn zài Běijīng
computer equipment meter exhibition will in December in Beijing
tóngshí jǔxíng.

Together hold

In order to meet the needs of the industries and businesses concerned, Banking China ‘93 and China Computer Show ‘93 are to be held in December in Beijing (lines 10-12).

‘Wèi’ has two functions. The first is to introduce the aim of the exhibition in the subordinate clause, which is to meet the needs raised in the previous step. The second is to link this with the main clause, which provides information about the name, place and time of the exhibition. In the main clause, the following sentence structure is introduced:

Name of the exhibition + jiāng yú (will) + time and place + jǔxíng (hold)

This sentence structure is related to the use of the formal schemata about how an exhibition can be introduced appropriately in a sales invitation. As noted in 4.2.1 of this chapter, the

content of this step is quite fixed, and this structure can also be found in other types of invitations.

(2) Move 2, inviting the reader (lines 12-13 and lines 46-47), is expressed in two places. The first is in a prominent place in the same paragraph as the introduction of the exhibition, and is written in the following form:

wǒsī chéngyǐ yāoqǐng guì sī pàiyuán cānjiā.
I-company sincere invite your (H) company send people participate
We sincerely invite your (H) company to participate (lines 12-13).

In this sentence, ‘chényǐ yāoqǐng’ (sincerely invite) and the honorific form of ‘you’ are used, which indicate that the writer is both sincere and respectful when inviting the reader.

The second invitation is realised in a similar way, but with more honorific lexical items:

wǒsī chéngyǐ yāoqǐng guì sī de guǎnlǐ jí kējì
I-company sincere invite your (H) company GNE manage and technology
dàibǎo lìlín cānguān shǐcǐ zhǎnlǎn.
representative come (H) visit this exhibition
Our company sincerely invites managerial and technical representatives from your
(H) company to visit (H) this exhibition (lines 46-47).

In the above sentence, the writer repeats the invitation by using the same form of ‘chényǐ yāoqǐng’ (sincerely invite) as the first invitation. However, this time the writer has shown more respect by using ‘lìlín’ (H come). This term is often used in written Chinese to refer to the coming of honourable guests (Shekeyuan, 1984:696). ‘Lìlín’ is used here to indicate a higher level of respect than ‘qiánwǎng’ (non-honorific ‘come’) in the first invitation. Both of the above are related to the purpose of inviting the reader as a guest. The repetition of inviting and the use of honorific lexis all contribute to this purpose.

(3) Move 3, describing the exhibition (lines 14-38), is presented after the invitation, and takes more space (423 characters, approximately 60% of the whole text) than anything else because it is the most important section of the letter. Whether or not the reader will accept the invitation depends mainly on what is being offered in the exhibition. This move is composed of the following two steps:

Step 1 Providing essential details of the exhibition (lines 14-38)

Step 2 Evaluating the exhibition (line 14 and lines 17-19)

The first step is realised in four paragraphs, the second and third paragraphs of the letter (lines 14-22) describe the scale of the exhibition, supported by the name of more than ten countries as participants, while the fourth and the fifth (lines 23-38) introduce various products to be exhibited. The description of the products is supported with a list of more than thirty products. For an exhibition, the scale and variety of products can be a very appealing factor for the reader.

The major section of the second paragraph is discussed as an example to indicate the main features of this step:

shǐcǐ zhǎnhuì guīmó pángdà, cānzhǎnshāng láizǐ
this-Class. exhibition scale great participate-exhibition-company come-from
shí duō gè guójiā hé dīqū, rú měiguó, déguó, rìběn, yīngguó,
ten more Class. country and district such-as America Germany Japan Britain
xīnjiāpō, ào zhōu, hánguó, yǐdàlì, táiwān, zhōngguó, xiānggǎng děngděng.
Singapore Australia Korea Italy Taiwan China Hong Kong etc.
shìjiè zhù míng zhī yíháng bǎoān, diànnǎo, tōngxìn, zìdòng huà
world famous GNE bank security computer tele-communication automation
shèbèishāng jiāng zhǎnchū zuì xīn zhī jīnróng jí yínháng jí
equipment-company will exhibit most new GNE finance and bank and
qíta gōngshāng jiè de xiānjìn jìshù shèbèi.
Other industry-commerce circle GNE advance technology equipment.

This show is to be held on a grand scale. The participating companies are from more than 10 countries and districts, such as the United States, Germany, Japan, England,

Singapore, Australia, Korea, Italy, Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, etc. Internationally well-known companies dealing with bank security, computers, tele-communication and automation equipment will exhibit their latest advanced equipment for financial, banking and other industrial and commercial enterprises (lines 14-19).

The above details about the scale of the exhibition are introduced in a deductive manner, in which the idea develops from the general, ‘guīmó pángdà’ (the grand scale), to the specific including the names of the participating countries which are introduced by the verb ‘láizǐ’ (come from) and variety of the products which is introduced by ‘zhǎnchū’ (exhibit), and is used to support the idea of being on a grand scale. The above provides a good example of how to introduce the scale of the exhibition in a well-supported manner. The use of a deductive strategy is appropriate here because the writer can provide a general idea of the scale with a list of the names of over ten countries and districts, so that the whole paragraph can cohere. These details are used to meet the needs of various readers and attract their interest.

The second step, evaluating the exhibition, is scattered among the first step, a typical feature of evaluating the exhibition in the corpus. For example, the first sentence in the above example can be seen as an evaluation because it gives an appraisal of the scale of the exhibition as being grand. The evaluation in this sentence is mainly achieved through ‘guīmó pángdà’ (grand scale). ‘Páng’ (grand) is an adjective of intensified meaning for ‘dà’ (big). We can also say that this evaluation is well-supported by the number of participants. Further evaluation can be seen in the above excerpt in the use of other forms of lexical boost (underlined). For example, the four-character expression ‘shǐjiè zhùmíng’ (internationally well-known) and the superlative degree of ‘zuǐ xīn’ (latest) are used to give positive evaluations. The products are especially appealing as they are related to the results of technological innovation by being the latest in advanced technology. In this way, the use of various adjective forms helps to achieve the purpose of giving positive appraisals of the exhibition and persuading the reader. These descriptions are persuasive, since the evaluations have been supported by detailed facts. This may be the reason why the managers thought this letter was ‘realistic’ in its persuasiveness, as noted in their comment No. 4.

(4) Move 4, offering incentives (lines 39-45), is expressed across two paragraphs, the sixth and seventh paragraphs of the letter. This move details other opportunities the writer promises the reader, including opportunities for sales and cooperation with foreign companies. The sixth paragraph is quoted below as an example:

tōngguò zhècǐ zhǎnhuǐ, guǐ gōngsī néng hùwù láizǐ shí duō
through this exhibition you (H) company can meet come-from ten more
gè yǐshàng guójiā hé dìqū gòng chāoguò qīshí duō gè
Class. over country and district all over seventy more Class.
zhìzàoshāng hé gòngyǐngshāng, qiàntán hézhò jǐhuà, bǐng huānyíng zuò
producer and supplier talk cooperate plan and welcome do
xiànchǎng zhǎnpǐn liúgòu.
on-the-spot exhibit leave-buy
Through participating in this exhibition, your (H) company can meet more than
seventy producers or suppliers from more than ten countries and districts, and talk
about cooperative plans with them. (You are) welcome to leave your on-site
exhibited products for sale (lines 39-42).

The incentives in the above example are achieved by promising the reader that if s/he participates in the exhibition s/he will benefit from it. The prepositional phrase ‘tōngguò zhècǐ zhǎnhuǐ’ (through this exhibition) is another way of saying ‘if you participate’, and the modal verb ‘néng’ (can) introduces the benefits the writer promises the reader at the exhibition, such as the talks. Another incentive is the opportunity to leave on-site exhibited products for sale after the exhibition. This incentive is introduced by the verb ‘huānyíng’ (welcome), which echoes the writer’s host-like attitude in this invitation.

These incentives can be used to push the reader to a quick decision. In this way, this step can help stimulate the desire to attend the exhibition and persuade the reader to come.

(5) Move 5, providing registration details (Lines 47-55), is composed of the following two steps:

Step 1 Giving registration details (47-49)

Step 2 Giving further contact information (50-55)

Step 1 is placed after the second time the reader is invited, and is written in the following way:

xiàn jǐn jǐshàng qǐngjiǎn, qǐng jièshí xiédài qǐngjiǎn wǎng
mow formal send invitation-card please then bring invitation-card go-to
guǒjì zhǎnlǎn zhōngxīn bànǐ rùchǎng shǒuxù.
international exhibition centre do admission procedure
Enclosed is an invitation card. Please bring this card with you and go to the
International Exhibition Centre to go through admission formalities (lines 47-49).

The details include an invitation card and the place of registration. When the invitation card is introduced, the letter used the word 'jǐn' (formally) as a formal register which matches the high respect required by invitation letters. The softener 'qǐng' (please) is used to indicate politeness in providing details about the registration.

The second step is introduced through a 'you-attitude' as shown below. Only the first part of this step is discussed, because the second part deals with contact details such as address and fax number. These contact details are preceded by the following sentence:

rú xū jǐnyībù zīliào, kě liǎnlù běijīng zhǎnlǎn fúwù yǒuxiàn
if need further material can contact Beijing exhibition service Ltd.
gōngsī bàngshǐchù:
company agency

If you need further materials, you can contact the Beijing agency of the Exhibition Services Ltd (lines 50-51).

As shown in the above example, further contact is included to meet the reader's needs. It is written in a conditional sentence introduced by 'rú' (if). As noted in the last chapter, conditional sentences can be used in Chinese to express a polite and non-obligatory request, and the further contact details are offered only to those who need them.

The above analysis can be summed up as follows. First, the major communicative purposes, such as inviting the reader as a guest and persuading the reader, are analysed in this letter. Each of these levels contributes to the realisation of these purposes by using appropriate world and formal schemata. For example, the writer employs appropriate forms to achieve the purpose of inviting the reader and establishing a host-guest relationship with the reader. What is more important is that, in addition to advertising the products, the writer employs persuasive strategies and justifies the evaluation of the exhibition with detailed descriptions. Secondly, the writer also gives an example of how to organise the ideas in a sales invitation. The writer follows a clear organisation of paragraph development to convey the ideas of both inviting and advertising the exhibition. This point has already been indicated in the managers' comment No. 1. In this way, in both content and structure, the letter achieves its effectiveness as a sales invitation.

6.2 The analysis of the least successful letter

The next section will analyse the least successful letter, Letter 2, in a similar way to the above analysis.

Letter 2

Invitation

XXX Machinery Factory mainly produces XXX automatic photoelectric carvers. The carvers are designed with the latest electronic circuits, and have computer installation. They are highly finished products made of a special kind of steel. They can endure long operation, as long as 24 hours without stopping. They are most solidly built, and the smallest in volume (Model Ys220), weighing only 31 Kg. They are very portable and occupy a space as small as a desk. The carving precision is the highest and has reached the degree of 3M. Four characters can be carved within in an M square: the carving machines are able to carve the smallest character you can write and the smallest picture you can draw. It is easy to operate: put the paper or carving object in place, press the computer button, the characters or the pictures you require can be automatically carved in concave or convex without any adjustments. We can provide different fonts for the carving boards, either the same size as the original or smaller. We have a full range of carving boards with as many as over forty kinds, such as circles, angles, rectangles, etc. Besides the over forty carving boards in the package, carving measurements in common use can also be supplied as required. If your carving tools become blunt after use you can send them to our company. We will sharpen them as quickly as we can. Now we are running a long-standing office at the Nanjing Hongqiao Exhibition Hall. You are respectfully invited to come and talk business.

Our company will attend the (Taiwan Comprehensive Machinery Exhibition) to be held from December 1-7 at No. XX, XXX Road, Nanjing (Hongqiao International Business Centre). At that time, the Taiwan Company will send representatives to the exhibition, offering on-site demonstrations and consultations. Your company is welcome to participate and exchange (information).

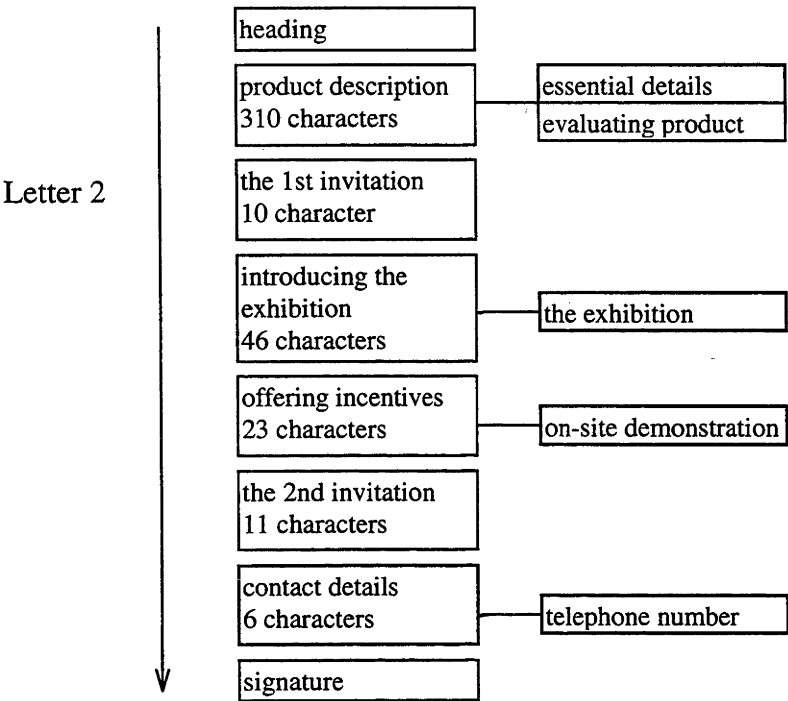
Telephone number: XXX.

With high respect

Business manager: XXX
XXX International Enterprise Ltd.

The structure of the letter is schematised in the following figure.

Figure 13. An illustration of the structure of Letter 2



The letter has a total of 406 characters

The above figure indicates the various moves and steps that appear in the letter. This letter has five moves typical of a sales invitation: (1) describing the product, (2) inviting the reader, (3) introducing the exhibition, (4) offering incentives, and (5) providing registration details. However, the letter begins with a detailed description of product without any indication that there will be a link between the description and the exhibition. In addition, the letter seems to follow a reversed sequence from other sales invitations in the corpus which develops from describing the exhibited products towards introducing the exhibition, and does not begin introducing the exhibition until the middle of the text in Line 24. This sequence may create some confusion about understanding the communicative purposes of the genre this letter belongs to. Some of the above points are also discussed by the managers as shown in the following typical comments they made on this letter.

- (1) “This letter does not have a complete format for a sales invitation, and includes no salutation or date. The heading of the letter is too general, and the writer does not explain what the invitation was about in the heading.”
- (2) “The writer focuses too much attention on describing the product and starts the letter with a long and detailed introduction to the products instead of inviting the reader. This kind of beginning can lead to some confusion and nobody would know it is a sales invitation from reading this section. Besides it is not polite or respectful to ignore the reader in a sales invitation in this way.”
- (3) “The descriptions of the product are too detailed and have too many technical terms. For example, the writer gives a lot of instructions about how to use the carvers, which makes the letter read like an instruction manual. The reader will get bored reading this.”
- (4) “This letter does not have very clear structural development or division into paragraphs. The product descriptions and the invitation are mixed up together in one long paragraph. I think the writer should describe the products step by step and place the invitation and introduction in separate paragraphs.”

The above managers’ views indicate why this letter is rated the least successful. The first comment is related to the appropriate use of formal schemata regarding formulaic components, such as the use of headings and salutations. The second comment is mainly related to the appropriate use of world schemata about how to coordinate sales into an invitation. The third comment is related to how to introduce the product in a sales invitation to attract the reader’s interest. The fourth comment is related to the use of formal schemata concerning the division of paragraphs. Paragraph structuring seems to be an important feature of conveying ideas. These comments will be integrated into the following analysis.

6.2.1 Detailed analysis

First of all, the moves and steps are described below:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Move 1 | Describing the product (lines 5-22) |
| Step 1 | Providing essential details of the product |
| Step 2 | Evaluating the product |

Move 2	Inviting the reader (lines 22-23, line 28)
Move 3	Introducing the exhibition (lines 24-26)
Move 4	Offering incentives for the exhibition (lines 26-27)
Move 5	Providing registration details (line 29)

As shown above, this letter can be divided into the above two levels of moves and steps. Only Move 1 is composed of two steps. The other four moves can be seen as having one step only, and inviting is repeated in two places. A detailed account of this top-down relationship between moves, steps, and a further lower level of linguistic forms will be elaborated below.

(1) Move 1, describing the product, (lines 5-22) is composed of the following two steps:

Step 1 Providing essential details of the product (lines 5-22)

Step 2 Evaluating the product (7-11)

The letter, without establishing any link between the product and the exhibition, suddenly begins with the following long descriptions within one single sentence:

XXX jīqìchǎng zhǔyào shēngchǎ XXX guāngdiàn shǐ zǐdòng
 XXX machinery-company mainly produce XXX light-electricity type automatic
 diāokèjī, jīqì jīng tèshū de shèjì yǐ zuì xīn shì diànzǐ huílù
 carver machine by special GNE design with most new style electronic circuit
 diànnào zhuāngzhǐ yǐjī tèshū gāngcái jīngzhǐ ér chéng, jīngdéqǐ
 computer install and special steel-material highly-make then finish endure
 cháng shíjiān de cāozuò, 24 xiǎoshí bùtíng de shǐyòng, gòuzào
 long time GNE operate 24 hour continuous GNE use make
 zuì jiāngù, tǐjī zuì xiǎo (Ys220 xíng), quánzhòng jǐn 31 kg, yídòng
 most solid volum most small (Ys220 model) overall-weight only 31 kg move
 fāngbài, bùzhàn kōngjiān, zhǐyáo yī xiǎozhuō jiù kě fāngzhǐ shǐyòng.
 easy not-occupy space only-need one small-desk only can place use

XXX Machinery Factory mainly produces XXX automatic photoelectric carvers. The carvers are designed with the latest electronic circuits, and have computer installation. They are highly finished product made of a special kind of steel. They can endure long operation, as long as 24 hours without stopping. They are most solidly built, and the smallest in volume (Model Ys220), weighing only 31 Kg. They are very portable and occupy a space as small as a desk (lines 5-10).

First of all, the above sentence is very long, and has 102 characters. A lot of information has been conveyed, which involves a substantial section of both Step 1 and Step 2. With such lengthy descriptions, the beginning could fail to attract the reader's attention. Secondly, the above example seems to emphasise advertising the product and is written in the register of a sales letter. For example, the start of the above sentence introduces the product in the following structure:

XXX Company zhǔyào shēngchǎ (mainly produces) XXX product

The above only gives some information about the producer and the product, which is one of the typical beginnings in sales letters as discussed in the last chapter. Then the letter proceeds with the details of this product, such as 'tèshū de shèjǐ' (special design), 'jīngzhǐ ér chéng' (highly finished product). These lexical items are closely related to the features of the product.

The second step is scattered among the first step. For example, the following use of adjectives and superlative degree (underlined) can be seen as related to this step. 'jīngděqǐ cháng shíjiān de cāozuò' (endure long operation), 'gòuzào zuǐ jiāngù' (most solidly built), 'tǐjī zuǐ xiǎo' (smallest in volume), and so on. These seem to be written in the appropriate forms, and some of these evaluations have even been supported by details about the product. Although some of the forms seem to be acceptable as used to describe the product, the writer fails to link the product description and the invitation. This weakness has also been noted in managers' comment No. 2.

(2) Move 2, inviting the reader (lines 22-23, line 28), is repeated, and the two invitations are both placed towards the end of the letters. The first inviting is placed after the lengthy description of the product and is written in the follow form:

jǐngqǐng gèwèi qiánlái cānguān, miàntán.

respect-invite everyone come visit talk

You are respectfully invited to come and talk business (lines 22-23).

The second invitation is placed after the introduction to the exhibition and is:

huānyíng guǐ gōngsī qiánlái cānjiā, jiāoliú.

welcome your (H) company come participate, exchange

Your company is welcome to participate and exchange (information) (line 28).

The linguistic forms of ‘jǐngqǐng’ (respectfully invite) in the first inviting and ‘huānyíng’ (welcome) in the second inviting are frequently used forms found in the corpus.

The above linguistic forms seem to be appropriate for inviting. However, there is some confusion created by the two instances of inviting. The writer seems to invite the reader to attend two different activities: to visit the agency, and to attend the exhibition, because the writer fails to indicate clearly what the major activity is that the reader is invited to.

(3) Move 3, introducing the exhibition (lines 24-26) is placed after the first inviting, and seems to be written in the usual form of introducing an exhibition by informing the reader about the name, time and place of the exhibition. However, in this move, the most important part — the name of the exhibition, is written in brackets (line 24), which may indicate that the writer does not consider the exhibition as important. This can also be another piece of evidence to show that the writer pays more attention to advertising the product than to inviting the reader to the exhibition.

(4) Move 4, offering incentives for the exhibition (lines 26-27), is placed after the introduction to the exhibition, and is expressed in the following forms:

jièshí, táiwān gōngsī jiān pàiyuán qīnlín nánjīng dàibánchù,
then Taiwan company will send-people come-in-person Nanjing agency
xiànchǎng yǎnshì yǔ zīxún.
on-site demonstrate and consult
At that time, the Taiwan Company will send representatives to the exhibition,
offering on-site demonstrations and consultations (lines 26-27).

In the above example, ‘jièshí’ (then) is the formal and appropriate form to be used in sales invitations and other types of ‘gongwen’ (official letters). The incentives are offered as ‘xiànchǎng yǎnshì yǔ zīxún’ (on-site demonstrations and consultations). If the reader is interested in the exhibited product, the above will be very good incentives to push the reader to make a quick decision.

(5) Move 4, registration details (line 29), only includes a telephone number. This is the only example of this type in the corpus. The writer should ideally have provided more information about how to attend the exhibition.

Generally speaking, ‘confusion’ at all levels of the text, above all, confusion of communicative purposes, is the major characteristic of this letter as discussed in managers’ comment No. 4. The letter fails to express clearly the main purpose of inviting the reader, and focuses too much on ‘sales’. From the analysis, it can be seen that clarity is a very important criterion for judging a letter. This letter fails to express the communicative purposes clearly because too many non-essential details about the products have been described and these hinder the development of the important idea of inviting the reader. This could be an instance of using world schemata in an inappropriate way to decide about what content can be included. The letter is also very badly structured. The writer places the introduction to the exhibition and inviting the reader towards the end, which is not a clear

way of writing a sales invitation. Both of the above reasons lead to confusion in understanding the letter.

7 Conclusion

First of all, this chapter discusses an emerging genre, sales invitations. This genre, differs from that of sales letters, and represents a brand new genre in both form and content, since sales invitations represent a new genre based on the pre-existing form of invitations. In their nature, sales invitations are, however, quite similar to sales letters in representing a new type of sales genres appearing under the influence of the market economy. Textbooks do not reflect this new development, and very few of them treat this genre as an independent genre. Those that discuss sales invitations do not really reflect this genre in its full form.

This chapter, essentially, further explores sales invitations using the combined approach proposed in Chapter 2. In the analysis, communicative purposes are used as an important principle showing how these letters are organised in a top-down model of moves, steps and linguistic forms. This genre has been discussed in the following three areas:

Firstly, this chapter illustrates that the initial step in the analysis is to identify communicative purposes of sales invitations. These purposes can be identified on the basis of using well-defined world schemata, which include knowledge of the etiquette of inviting people, knowledge about promoting exhibitions, and knowledge of the reader-writer relationship.

Secondly, this chapter analyses the lower levels of moves, steps and linguistic forms as related to the realisation of communicative purposes. To be specific, the formulaic moves are found to be used mainly to achieve the purpose of relationship building, achieving positive public image, and inviting the reader. For example, headings and closings tend to use inviting-related lexis to indicate the genre of invitation.

Some of the moves appear to be obligatory and some optional. Here only content moves are discussed because the formulaic moves are relatively stable and fixed. For example, the moves of introducing the exhibition, inviting the reader, describing the exhibition and providing registration details appear to be obligatory. 'Establishing credentials' and 'offering incentives' appear to be optional. There is also splitting of moves,

for example, 'offering incentives' can occur in two separate places within one letter. There is also repetition of moves, especially in the case 'inviting the reader'.

The content moves are used to achieve multiple purposes, among which 'inviting the reader' and 'persuading the reader to attend the exhibition' are found to be the most important. This point has been supported by the managers' comments. Therefore, on the one hand, 'describing the exhibition' becomes the focus of the letter and this is where persuasion is usually given. On the other hand, 'inviting the reader' also takes an important position, and can occur quite early in the letter. In addition, repetition of the invitation is found as a strategy to achieve sincerity and hospitality. This phenomenon of repeating invitations is also found to be a typical Chinese cultural value which can be used to understand Chinese invitations in general.

The linguistic forms to achieve communicative purposes have also been examined. For example, lexical items used for inviting tend to be polite and respectful, and this contributes to the realisation of inviting the reader as a guest. In addition, 'shangxing' lexical items, as found in sales letters, are also found in sales invitations. This shows that sales invitations exhibit a polite and respectful register. In fact, the writer tries to employ this polite linguistic distance, and even lowers himself/herself in order to gain respect from the reader in spite of the equal institutional distance between them. This assumed distance is used as an important strategy to show respect to the reader in sales invitations.

Third, questionnaire results and interviews were discussed to gather the views about formulaic moves among enterprise managers and business writing students. The results show that the managers, have a more effective understanding of the communicative purposes of sales invitations, based on the better-defined schemata gained from their writing experience, and are able to relate their lower level choices in a better way to these purposes. However, the two groups shared similar views on the use of formulaic components such as headings, and well-wishes. This appears to result from the fact that inviting has a lot to do with the cultural protocols of polite behaviour. In spite of this, their different opinions about the use of greetings and salutation forms indicate that their different understandings of the communicative purposes can influence lower-level preferences.

Fourth, the analysis of the most and least successful letters identified by the managers indicate their general expectations about writing sales invitations. The most

successful letter is a good example of using world and formal schemata appropriately. The letter combines the purposes of inviting the reader and advertising the exhibition in an appropriate way. The letter is also well-organised in its paragraph structure and clearly brings out the major communicative purposes. However, the least successful letter provides an inappropriate example of using world and formal schemata to write a sales invitation. It has poor structural development, and fails to express the major communicative purposes in a clear way.

We conclude, therefore, that communicative purposes can be used as a reliable criteria to discuss and judge sales invitations. An effective sales invitation is supposed to convey clearly at various levels in the text the development of ideas that will contribute to the general realisation of the communicative purposes.

Chapter 6. Genre analysis of sales ‘tongzhi’

1 Introduction

In Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, we analysed two ‘pingxing’ genres of sales letters and sales invitations. In this chapter, we shall examine a ‘xiaxing’ sales genre – sales ‘tongzhi’ (circulars). This genre is also related to sales and may share some similar purposes with the other two sales genres. However, it is treated as a different sales genre because it belongs to ‘xiaxing tongzhi’ and has some different communicative purposes from each of the two previously discussed genres.

Since sales ‘tongzhi’ belong to ‘tongzhi’ (circulars), we will describe ‘tongzhi’ first. The term ‘通知’ (tongzhi) literally means ‘to inform’, or ‘to announce’. However, this term has been given a different meaning as a type of ‘gongwen’ (official letters) used to give an order or instruction. According to Deng et al. (1993:80), ‘tongzhi’ are the most frequently used ‘gongwen’ in mainland China. This genre is preferred when the writer is not in a position to use ‘ling’ (order), which is an explicit order in Chinese. According to Deng et al. (1993), ‘ling’ can only be used by the supreme government levels of the country. However this does not mean ‘tongzhi’ are not related to orders. As Liang et al. (1992:230) claim, ‘tongzhi’ are mainly used as a ‘xiaxing’ genre by which the superior gives orders or instructions to subordinates. We can describe ‘tongzhi’ as a type of writing used to give an implicit order or instruction to subordinate organisations. ‘Tongzhi’ can be used in both government bureaucracy and in business. For a discussion of other types of ‘tongzhi’ see Zhu (1996).

From this description, it can be seen that the translation of ‘tongzhi’ as ‘circular’ is only an approximation of its meaning, and ‘circular’ cannot fully encapsulate its meaning. A ‘tongzhi’ is only similar to a ‘circular’ in that ‘tongzhi’ are circulated to many organisations. However, all the readers have to be subordinate organisations under the official control of the writer’s organisation.

Turning now to sales ‘tongzhi’, one may ask why a sales promotion should be written in this form instead of that of sales letters. What are the communicative purposes and how they are realised in the text? These are the questions this chapter aims to explore. The

approach to be used is also the combined approach proposed in Chapter 2, which has already been used in analysing sales letters and sales invitations in the last two chapters.

The examination of this genre is mainly composed of the following five steps:

- (1) A brief introduction will be given to sales ‘tongzhi’ (circulars) based on textbook descriptions.
- (2) The communicative purposes of sales ‘tongzhi’ will be discussed in detail.
- (3) A top-down analysis will be undertaken of the general structure of the sales ‘tongzhi’ in the twenty-letter corpus. The major questions to be explored are: what steps and linguistic forms are used to encode the formulaic moves and content moves? and what formulaic moves and content moves are employed to realise the communicative purposes?
- (4) Business students’ views of language use at different levels of the text will be compared with those of enterprise managers. A similar comparison has been made in the last two chapters, and the findings indicate that the two groups differ in their understanding of the communicative purposes, because they have different knowledge structures. This divergence, to a certain degree, has led to their different preferences at lower levels of the text, such as moves, steps, and linguistic forms. This chapter will further examine whether such differences appear in the genre of sales ‘tongzhi’ (circulars) and what kinds of approaches these two groups of native speakers tend to use in their discussion.
- (5) The structure of the most and least successful letters identified by the group of enterprise managers will be analysed in detail to illustrate how the combined approach can be used to analyse the genre. As with the analysis in the last two chapters, the managers’ views will be integrated into the analysis to indicate the general expectations of the professional discourse community.
- (6) Finally, specific aspects of genre change in this genre will be examined. As noted in Chapter 1, sales ‘tongzhi’ (circulars) in the second period of business communication (1978 to the present) reflect changes in economic structures.

2 Introducing sales ‘tongzhi’

As noted in Chapter 1, sales ‘tongzhi’ belong to the ‘xiaxing’ genre, and are the only sales genre that has been used in both the delinking and relinking periods of Chinese business communication. What this chapter is concerned with is the current use of sales ‘tongzhi’ in

the transitional period of economic reform in which both the planned and the market economy are practised. Sales ‘tongzhi’ fit the descriptions of ‘tongzhi’ given earlier. First of all, they are related to implicit orders. Secondly, they are circulated to subordinate organisations. However, a sales ‘tongzhi’ differs from other types of government ‘tongzhi’ in that sales ‘tongzhi’ can be used to promote products. In this respect, it is a rather complex genre exhibiting both ‘tongzhi’ and promotional features. This combination of features can only be understood by referring to new developments of the economic contexts in mainland China. The current sales ‘tongzhi’ reflect the mixed nature of the economic structure. On the one hand, since government organisations still exercise some control over the management of subordinate companies, these superior organisations can promote sales by using ‘tongzhi’ to give instructions or orders to the subordinate. On the other hand, as a result of economic reforms, superiors do not have the same level of authority as in the pre-reform period. They have to absorb some promotion strategies when they write sales ‘tongzhi’. This genre can thus indicate a genre shift through the combination of ‘tongzhi’ and promotion.

No textbooks discuss sales ‘tongzhi’ as an individual genre, nor do they discuss how sales ‘tongzhi’ reflect changes in the economic structure. There seems to be a time-lag between the normative textbook treatment and social context. The textbooks tend to discuss ‘tongzhi’ as one type of writing, and we only refer to the features of writing ‘tongzhi’ in a general sense. In spite of this, these features can serve as guidelines for writing sales ‘tongzhi’ and help to highlight the language change taking place in this genre.

3 Rules of writing ‘tongzhi’: a textbook approach

Textbooks, such as Kanshou (1990), Chen (1991), Deng et al. (1993), Gu (1995), He and Lü (1991), Li (1983), Li (1990), and Liang et al. (1992) prescribe rules for writing ‘tongzhi’. There are three basic kinds of rules found in these textbooks. These are summarised below:

- (1). A ‘tongzhi’ is composed of four parts: the heading, which describes what kind of ‘tongzhi’ the letter is, the salutation, the body of ‘tongzhi’, and the signature and date. The heading expresses the main purpose of the ‘tongzhi’. The body of the

‘tongzhi’ begins with the reason for issuing the ‘tongzhi’, followed by instructions given to the reader, and sometimes also by the measures which need to be taken for carrying out the ‘tongzhi’.

(2). The language of the ‘tongzhi’ has to be straightforward and solemn. It represents the voice of the authority. The writer is supposed to notify the reader in a clear way.

(3). The closing to be used for a ‘tongzhi’ is ‘tècǐ tōngzhī’ (especially ‘tongzhi’), although closing can be omitted. Well-wishes such as ‘cǐzhǐ jǐnglǐ’ (with high respect) should not be used.

The first prescription mainly talks about the components of a ‘tongzhi’. The second talks about the use of language to represent the official tone. The third talks about what kind of closing can be used. These rules give a general depiction for writing ‘tongzhi’.

In Chapter 1, an example of earlier sales ‘tongzhi’ was given, which were basically used to accomplish the country’s selling policies. Today this type of ‘tongzhi’ is still used by the government to give orders. Therefore an example of an authentic government ‘tongzhi’ will be discussed to reflect the general features of government ‘tongzhi’ as well as the earlier sales ‘tongzhi’. Both the original and translation of this ‘tongzhi’ are provided below.

中 国 对 外 经 济 贸 易 部

关 于 禁 止 进 口 旧 服 装 的 通 知

近年来，一些地区或部门的公司不顾人体健康和传染病的危害，从外国，香港等地大量进口旧服装，贩卖牟利，在社会上造成了不良影响。

为保护我国人民群众的健康，维护国家声誉，经有关部门研究决定：从文件到达之日起，各地区，各部门必须立即停止以任何贸易方式进口旧服装。如有违犯，一律由海关按走私查处，并追究进口单位的责任。在此以前，已对外订妥尚未到货的进口旧服装，应于外商交涉退货或在境外就地处理，不要再运回国内；确实不能退货或在外处理不了的，到货时由海关查扣，并经卫生部门检疫消毒后，交商业管理部门处理。

**Document of the Ministry of Foreign Trade
Tongzhi Prohibiting the Import of Second-hand Clothes**

The foreign trade committees, bureaus of every province and city,

In recent years, companies in some districts and departments have imported large quantities of second-hand clothes from Hong Kong and other foreign countries regardless of the people's health and the danger of contagious disease. They have made profits from selling these clothes but have brought about harmful effects for the society.

In order to protect the health of our people, and to defend our national honour, after discussing this matter with some of the departments concerned, we have made the following decisions. When this document is received, all districts and departments must immediately stop importing second-hand clothes through any business channels. If anyone violates this decision, he is to be investigated and punished as a smuggler by customs, and the responsibility of the importing company has to be investigated. For those who have made an order but have not received delivery of the second-hand clothes yet, they should negotiate with the exporters to cancel the order or sell them where they were ordered, and should not ship them to our country. As to those who can neither cancel nor sell the clothes, their delivery has to be suspended and investigated by customs, and they have to be quarantined and sterilised by medical departments, and handed over to commercial managerial departments.

The Ministry of Foreign Trade
April 29, 1985.

This letter is a typical 'xiaxing tongzhi'. The components of this letter, following Prescription 1, are headings, the body of the letter and a date. There are two headings in the letter, the first heading indicates the issuer of 'tongzhi' which is Ministry of Foreign Trade, and at the same time, it also indicates the official status of the writer at the ministry level. The second heading has the character 'tongzhi' to indicate the 'tongzhi' genre, and also indicates the main purpose of this letter, which is 'prohibiting the import of second-hand clothes'. This way of indicating the purpose at the beginning is the opposite to the structure of the request letters analysed by Kirkpatrick (1991, 1993) where purpose did not become clear until the end. This may reflect the fact that the above 'tongzhi' is a formal 'gongwen' (official letter) which uses the heading required for clarity of purpose.

The salutation addressing all the organisations concerned is a typical generic feature of ‘tongzhi’ writing. The writer intends to include all readers across the hierarchical structure in the salutation in order to indicate the extent of circulation of the letter. The writer, at the beginning of the second paragraph, introduces the general objectives for writing this letter, and then makes clear the order to be given to the reader, which is to prohibit importing second-hand clothes, and finally explicates the measures taken for carrying out the ‘tongzhi’. This letter is also consistent with the textbook rule of maintaining the official’s solemn voice. Take the following sentence from the second paragraph as an example:

cóng wénjiàn dàodá zhī rì qǐ, gè dīqū, gè bùmén bǐxūn
from document arrive GNE date begin every district every unit must
lǐjǐ tíngzhǐ yǐ rènghè màoyǐ fāngshì jìnkǒu jiù fúzhuāng.
immediately stop in any trade channel import second-hand clothes
When this document is received, all districts and departments must immediately stop
importing second-hand clothes through any business channels.

In the above example, the official’s voice makes itself felt through the use of the phrase ‘bǐxūn lǐjǐ tíngzhǐ’ (must immediately stop). It is composed of a modal ‘bǐxūn’ (must), the adjective ‘lǐjǐ’ (immediate) and the verb ‘tíngzhǐ’ (stop). ‘Bǐxūn’ indicates imperativeness, and modifies a verb, and is usually used by a superior to issue an order or instruction. In this example, the authority of the order is strengthened by the adjective ‘lǐjǐ’ (immediate), which indicates that the order is not only imperative, but also urgent. So the employment of modal verbs of imperativeness and some ‘xiaxing’ lexical items is a typical characteristic of the ‘xiaxing tongzhi’ language.

Although there is no detailed textbook advice about the use of ‘tongzhi’ lexis in the ‘xiaxing’ genre, typical lexical items can be found in the excerpts of ‘tongzhi’ in textbooks. For example, the generic salutation is often introduced with ‘gè’ (every), such as ‘gè

dānwèi' (every organisation). The closing is often related to the 'tongzhi', such as 'tècǐ tōngzhī' (specially tongzhi).

Other lexical items include:

(1) Decision-making: juéjǐng (decide) and jǐng yánjiū juéding (decide after discussion).

(2) Orders and requirements: bǐxū (must), yào (have to), bùdé (not allowed), zhuānjīn (to be quick), lìjǐ (immediately), bù yǔ (refuse), (xī)wàng (hope) and qǐng (please).

The above is not an exhaustive list of all the typical 'tongzhi' lexical forms. However, generally speaking, these forms indicate the 'xiaxing' register. For example, they can indicate decisions and orders, as in the case of 'juéjǐng' (decide), 'bǐxū' (must) and 'yào' (have to). They can also indicate the power of the superior through the use of forms such as bùdé (not allowed) and bù yǔ (refuse). Here it needs to be pointed out that polite forms found in 'pingxing' request such as 'wàng' (hope)' and 'qǐng' (please) are sometimes used in 'tongzhi'. This can be related to the implicitness of the order, and this point will be discussed later in this chapter. All the forms listed above will be used as a reference to discuss the genre change in sales 'tongzhi'.

Another point that is worth noting in the above example is that the textbook prescriptions cannot fully explain this 'tongzhi'. As with the sales genres discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the communicative purposes have not been fully explored. For example, in the above example, the first paragraph can be related to justifying the order on scientific grounds. This purpose is typical of 'xiaxing tongzhi'. The writer, on the one hand, points out a wrong practice. On the other hand, the s/he also tries to explain why it is wrong: because people's health is endangered. Another purpose the textbooks fail to mention is that 'tongzhi' express the writer's official status. Although textbooks have mentioned the use of official language, they fail to explore the purposes for which these forms are used.

As mentioned in the last two chapters, textbooks tend to ignore some communicative purposes, especially those relating to perlocutionary forces. In the case of sales 'tongzhi',

achieving official status can be seen as a kind of perlocutionary force, because the writer intends to make the reader feel his/her official status. In addition, one may question whether textbooks reflect the writing practice of sales 'tongzhi', and the dynamic features of this genre, which is changing in the transitional period of economic reform. These questions will be explored in this chapter. To do this, the following sections will focus on a further examination of the communicative purposes from the corpus of twenty authentic letters (For details of the data source, refer to Chapter 3).

4 Studying the communicative purposes of sales 'tongzhi'

As noted in Chapter 2, world schemata can be used to identify communicative purposes. In the present case, the relevant world schemata are related to four kinds of knowledge: that relating to the writer's official status, to the hierarchical writer-reader relationship, to positive public image, and to marketing strategies. The first three also involve the study of changes in social and economic philosophy in business communication. An analysis of the kinds of power and official status sales 'tongzhi' express will help to explain the above world schemata. It is important to understand why subordinates accept orders from superiors. In addition, it is also important to know what kind of official status sales 'tongzhi' may have, and how this status is changing with the development of economic reform.

Using language to indicate official status and power is one of the major characteristics of 'tongzhi', including sales 'tongzhi'. Political authority can simultaneously entail both power and official status under the planned economy. The superior has power and official status simply because s/he happens to be a part of a higher-level organisation that has control over its subordinates who, in turn, have a belief in the superior's power. This belief can be explained in the light of Weber's¹³ analysis of authority and beliefs. According to Weber (1958), different authority types can be built upon different beliefs. For example, an individual's efficiency can form the basis of belief in a certain authority. Based upon this claim, Bell (1975:59) has listed three types of authority, which can be summarised as follows:

¹³ Here Weber's (1958) theory is referred to as a general principle rather than treated as specific for capitalist development.

- (1) Charismatic authority, which is related to a belief that an individual or group has supernatural ability to make good decisions for a collectivity;
- (2) Traditional authority, which is related to a belief about certain forms of rules which ‘have been around for a long time’. The source of this belief is customs, habits, etc.;
- (3) Rational-legal authority, which is related to a belief based on an existing system that embodies the norms of efficiency, effectiveness, etc. This system is protected by certain constitutional or statutory guarantees. The source of this belief is sophisticated indoctrination and the growth of bureaucracy.

In the above three types of authority, the first type emphasises personal qualities. It is not really relevant to the authority exhibited in sales ‘tongzhi’, because the writers of this genre represent a higher level organisation, rather than being a higher level individual. The second and third types can be seen as relevant to explain the authority as shown in sales ‘tongzhi’.

Since sales ‘tongzhi’ have been in use for more than half a century, a habitual pattern of trust and obedience has been formed among the users. According to Liang et al. (1992), ‘tongzhi’ was first introduced as a formal ‘xiaxing’ official letter to inform subordinates about a superior’s instructions during the 1940s. It was used by both the opposing political parties: the Kuomintang and the Communists, and both of them found ‘tongzhi’ to be a useful form to implement the superiors’ orders. To a certain extent, this habitual use of ‘tongzhi’ can suggest some links to the traditional belief of obeying superiors, which can be traced back to ancient times. A subject was supposed to obey the emperor’s order without question. Obeying the superior is a cultural norm in superior-subordinate relationships. Since the establishment of the People’s Republic, there has been a lot of changes in relation to a superior’s image, as ‘píngděng’ (equality) is often praised. However, the superior’s role as a decision maker still remains the same. Therefore, status has been an important factor. The superior is always the one to decide, and the subordinate is supposed to have this traditional belief in the superior’s power.

Today, under the influence of the market economy, these habitual beliefs are being challenged. However, this does not mean that the traditional status will suddenly disappear. People with high social status are in a much more advantageous position to make decisions than those without. This kind of belief may be the major reason for the writer using official

status and power in sales ‘tongzhi’. The subordinates have a belief in the superior mainly because the latter has a higher social rank.

Rational-legal authority refers to beliefs rooted in the existing social system which is protected by legal measures. Since China still has a planned and centralising economy, a superior’s institutional control is protected by the legal system as part of the political system. However, this authority may not be as efficient as before the market economy was introduced. Consequently, subordinates’ belief in authority may be shaken by degree in accordance with the extent of lack of efficiency exhibited by the superior. This change could eventually lead to a change in the communicative purposes and world knowledge structures involved in writing sales ‘tongzhi’.

Taking the above into account, one can see the importance of knowledge related to the writer’s official status, such as understanding its importance and how to achieve it. It is important to indicate the writer’s official status, because ‘tongzhi’ is a ‘xiaxing’ genre and only a superior organisation is entitled to use it. However, it is also important to understand the changes taking place. As the planned economy is challenged by the market economy during the economic reform, official status may not be as powerful as before and officials may lose some of their control over their subordinates.

The second kind of knowledge important for sales ‘tongzhi’ relates to the hierarchical reader-writer relationship. In this genre, the writer is in a higher position and has some institutional control over the management of the reader’s company. The reader is in a lower position and is required to accept the writer’s decisions and orders. However, along with the shift in economic philosophy, the relationship between the writer and the reader is also changing. Subordinates can have more say in business management. In addition, there is also a seller and buyer relationship involved. Under these circumstances, will subordinates accept what the superior tells them to do? The answer may either be ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Therefore, the superior is not as positive as before that the reader will accept the ‘tongzhi’ order expressed in sales ‘tongzhi’. Such knowledge will form a basis for decisions about the appropriate linguistic forms to express this shift in their relationship.

The third kind of knowledge is related to the positive image as a superior. Some Chinese political concepts such as ‘shàng xià jí píngděng’ (equality between the superior and subordinate) can offer clues to what can be viewed as a positive image. The ‘equality’

here is not actual institutional equality. It rather refers to modest attitudes a superior holds towards a subordinate as a communication tactic. This kind of knowledge can help explain the use of polite formal schemata. For example, Xu (1987) stresses that, in spite of the solemn style, the writers of official documents have to use polite language such as ‘qǐng’ (please) and ‘wàng’ (hope) to indicate a modest attitude towards the reader.

This kind of knowledge seems to contradict the first kind. However, if put in the cultural context, the two kinds of knowledge complement each other. An authority figure is often praised as ‘píngyǐ jǐnrén’ (amiable and approachable), ‘méi guānjiàzi’ (not putting on official airs). This practice, in fact, has a long tradition, and can be traced back to the principles that Mao claimed an official should follow during the Second World War. At that time, it was used as a tactic to win over the masses and enlarge Mao’s army. Since then, it has become an important part of a positive official image.

Today, this image is changing too, and sales ‘tongzhi’ tend to be more and more polite. However today’s change is not related to the political propaganda noted above, but arises from a practical need. Under the influence of the market economy, there is a need for superiors to promote products, even if they have superior official status. The writer has to create a dual image of both a superior and a seller. Notice here a difference between the accepted practice of ‘tongzhi’ and the new sales ‘tongzhi’ image. It is the latter factor that will help explain changes in lower level forms as well.

The fourth kind of knowledge refers to marketing knowledge of how to advertise a product. This kind of knowledge may be new to some superior organisations, because it would not have been necessary to promote any product under the planned economy. However, it has already become an accepted practice in sales ‘tongzhi’ as the superior loses more and more control over the management of the subordinates’ business. The writer has to study market demands and the technology used in today’s marketing. It is especially important that the writer can use this kind of knowledge to convince the reader about the quality of a product.

If the above world schemata are applied appropriately, one can, on close examination of the corpus, ascertain a complex set of communicative purposes. The most obvious purpose is that the writer implicitly orders the reader to buy the product or service. In order

to ensure the success of this order, the writer has to employ additional tactics as well. To be specific, sales ‘tongzhi’ can have a series of communicative purposes as shown below:

- 1 To issue a ‘tongzhi’ order to the reader to buy the product or service
- 2 To express the writer’s official status and justify the use of ‘tongzhi’
- 3 To achieve a positive public image as an official
- 4 To attract the reader’s interest in the product or service
- 5 To give positive appraisals of the product
- 6 To persuade the reader that the order is reasonable and persuade the reader about the value of the product

All of the above can be seen as related to the first purpose of ordering the reader to buy the product or service.

The first three purposes can be related to power and achieving official status, which are typical purposes of sales ‘tongzhi’. The first purpose is related to issuing a sales ‘tongzhi’ order. The second is subordinate to this and indicates that the writer has the necessary power. The third purpose is related to knowledge about the modest attitude an official should have in writing this genre.

The last three purposes can be seen as related to promoting the product, which are the purposes this genre has in common with sales letters. This may be an influence of sales letters and a change of communicative purposes in this type of ‘tongzhi’. Although these purposes do not really follow the AIDA model (see Chapter 4), they can reflect the model to a certain degree. For example, attracting the reader’s interest and arousing the reader’s desire to buy the product are explicitly shown. Among three purposes, persuading the reader is the most important because the reader needs to be convinced of the good value of the product. ‘Attracting the reader’s interest’ in the product can be an initial step in product promotion. ‘Giving positive appraisals’ is seen as subordinate to persuading the reader, because appraisals may be factors which help convince him/her. Notice that there are two kinds of persuasion in the last purpose: to justify the order and to persuade the reader to buy the product. The former is the traditional purpose in ‘tongzhi’, while the latter is a change in communicative purpose to meet the needs of product promotion.

However, there are complex relationships among these purposes, which can interweave. For example, the first purpose, ordering the reader to buy the product, is related to the nature of ‘xiaxing tongzhi’. At the same time, it is also related to calling for action in product promotion. Some purposes may come into conflict with each other. For example, ‘achieving the writer’s official status’ may conflict with persuasiveness. If a sales ‘tongzhi’ emphasises the official status too much, it might not sound very persuasive because it may create the feeling that the writer relies on his/her authority to force the writer to buy the product. A complete grasp of world knowledge can help understand and balance these relationships.

As shown above, more communicative purposes are found in the corpus than the textbooks suggest. As noted earlier, those purposes especially relating to the perlocutionary force, such as ‘achieving official the writer’s official status’, are not fully explored. Therefore, a more detailed analysis of communicative purposes of this genre will be given below.

5 The top-down process of realising communicative purposes

In this section, the concept of the top-down information processing is applied to study how the communicative purposes are related to lower levels of the text and how each level contributes to their general realisation. In addition, how the shift in communicative purposes is shown at lower levels will also be examined. The communicative purposes of sales ‘tongzhi’ in the corpus were found to be realised by the following structural moves:

Level 1: Text that reflects the communicative purposes

Levels 2 and 3: Moves and steps

Formulaic moves:

- 1 Heading
- 2 Opening move: salutation
- 3 Closing moves:
 - Polite closing
 - Signature and date

Content moves:

- 1 Informing the reader about the sales decision or plan
 - Step 1 Providing background information
 - Step 2 Indicating background objectives
 - Step 3 Introducing the sales decision or plan
- 2 Describing the product or service

- Step 1 Providing details about the product
 - Step 2 Evaluating the product
- 3 Offering incentives
 - Step 1 Indicating the benefits the product or service may bring
 - Step 2 Offering a special price, or giving a free gift
- 4 Issuing a 'tongzhi' order
 - Step 1 Making an implicit order
 - Step 2 Using pressure tactics
- 5 Indicating requirements to carry out the order

As shown above, sales ‘tongzhi’ also have two kinds of moves: formulaic moves and content moves. The formulaic moves consist of: headings, salutations, polite closings and the signature and date. Content moves consist of five types: informing the reader about a sales decision, describing the product or service, offering incentives, issuing a ‘tongzhi’ order, and indicating requirements. Each of these moves can be seen as contributing to the realisation of communicative purposes. For example, the heading can be related to establishing the writer’s official status for a ‘tongzhi’, because the heading usually tells the reader that the letter is a ‘xiaxing tongzhi’. ‘Informing the reader about the sales decision’, ‘issuing an implicit order’, and ‘indicating requirements’ can also be related to establishing official status as they indicate that the superior is a decision-maker and is entitled to give orders.

The second move, describing the product, reflects an aspect of genre change since it includes promotion in ‘tongzhi’ (circulars). This move can be related to the purposes of giving positive appraisals and persuading the reader. At the same time, it can also contribute to ‘achieving a positive public image’, because this move may indicate that the superior does not depend completely on official status, but also on using persuasive factors. This shows that the relationship between communicative purposes and moves is rather flexible, and the writer can seek to achieve one purpose in more than one move, where one move can be related to the realisation of more than one purpose. Therefore the relationships discussed above can only be used as a ‘template’ guideline in understanding this genre.

5.1 Analysing the formulaic moves

The lexical items used for headings, salutations, and polite closings will be examined in relation to communicative purposes. The distribution of these moves found in the corpus are shown in Table 11:

Table 11. The use of formulaic components

	Heading 1	Heading 2	Salutation	Polite closing
Letter 1	+	+	+	∅
Letter 2	∅	+	+	+
Letter 3	+	+	+	∅
Letter 4	∅	+	+	+
Letter 5	+	+	+	∅
Letter 6	∅	+	+	+
Letter 7	∅	+	+	+
Letter 8	+	+	∅	∅
Letter 9	∅	+	+	∅
Letter 10	∅	+	∅	+
Letter 11	+	+	+	∅
Letter 12	∅	+	+	∅
Letter 13	∅	+	∅	∅
Letter 14	+	+	+	∅
Letter 15	∅	+	+	∅
Letter 16	∅	+	+	∅
Letter 17	+	+	+	+
Letter 18	∅	+	+	∅
Letter 19	∅	+	+	+
Letter 20	+	+	+	∅

As shown in the above table, there are two kinds of headings. Heading 1 usually refers to the writer’s organisation, and Heading 2 indicates that the letter is a ‘tongzhi’. Both of these headings will be discussed further in Section 4.1.1. All of the twenty letters have headings. Eight letters (40%) have both Heading 1 and Heading 2, and all have Heading 2. The majority have salutations, but only seven letters (35%) include a polite closing. This finding shows that the formulaic moves are generally consistent with textbook prescriptions as having headings and salutations. The inclusion of a polite closing may indicate a disregard for textbook advice as textbooks do not encourage its use.

No greetings were found in the corpus. ‘Tongzhi’ seem to involve a formal distance from the reader by having headings, but no greetings. As discussed in Chapter 4, greetings are related to personal relationship building. This lack of a personal relationship is a feature of ‘xiaxing’ genres, which distances the writer and the reader as superior and subordinate respectively. This feature may be related to the purpose of indicating the writer’s official status. However, on the other hand, the use of a polite closing can also indicate that the

writer may be trying to establish a polite official image. This seems to indicate a shift towards using polite formulaic forms in modern sales ‘tongzhi’.

The linguistic forms used for headings, salutations and polite closings are discussed below to indicate how the lowest level of the formulaic moves is related to the communicative purposes.

5.1.1 The linguistic forms used as headings

As shown in Table 11, two kinds of headings are used. Take the following headings from one letter as an example:

- 1

zhōngguó fǎnzhǐpǐn jìnchūkǒu shānghuǐ wěnjiàn

China textile-product import-export commerce-association document

A document of the Chinese Commercial Association of Textile Imports and Exports
- 2

guānyú xiàng gè huìyuán dānwèi zhēngjí guǎnggào de tōngzhī

about from every member company solicit advertise GNE circular

Tongzhi about Soliciting Advertisements from Member Companies

In the above, the first heading indicates the name of the organisation or company of the writer, indicating the issuer of the ‘tongzhi’. The term ‘wěnjiàn’ here is another name for formal ‘gongwen’ (official letter). The letters are therefore more formal with this kind of heading than without. As He and LÜ (1992) stress, both of the above kinds of heading are often required for writing a formal ‘gongwen’. The second heading has two functions. The first is to indicate that the letter is a type of ‘tongzhi’. All twenty letters in the corpus use ‘tongzhi’ in the heading. The second function of this heading is to indicate what the letter is about. In this case, the letter seeks to solicit advertisements from member companies.

As shown in Table 11, the first type of heading, which may suggest a formal register, is only used by eight letters (40%) while the second type is used by all the letters. This shows that there are both formal and less formal forms of ‘tongzhi’ in practice, and the latter outnumbers the former. There seems to be an ongoing register change of sales ‘tongzhi’ from formal to less formal. The reason for this may be that the first type of heading

emphasises the formality and the level of the writer's official status. Since indicating the writer's official status is not the most important feature in sales 'tongzhi', the writers may not stress this. To a certain extent, the writer has some choice about whether to include the first type of heading, while the second type of heading is obligatory.

5.1.2 The use of salutations

As shown in Table 11, seventeen letters (85%) have salutations, while three (15%) do not have salutations. Among the letters that have salutations, there are some differences. Nine letters (45%) have a generic salutation, such as 'gè huǐyuán dānwèi' (every member company). Eight letters (40%) use more specific salutations such as company names and personal titles.

Generic salutations include:

- (1) gè huǐyuán dānwèi
 every member company
 To every member company

- (2) gè yǒuguān dānwèi
 every concern company
 To all the companies concerned

- (3) XXX shěng gè shēngchǎn qǐyè
 XXX province every manufacture enterprise
 To all the manufacturing enterprises in XXX Province

The above three salutations can address different groups of readers. However, there are two things in common: all the above headings use the character 'gè' (every) referring to all the readers in the general group, and these readers are all under the institutional control of the writer. It has to be pointed out that the English translation of 'gè yǒuguān dānwèi' into 'to the company concerned' is only an approximation. The Chinese original means all the

relevant subordinate companies, thus indicating a ‘xiaxing’ register. The use of these types of generic salutation is consistent with ‘tongzhi’ excerpts in textbooks.

Specific salutations come in two kinds: specific company names and titles. These salutations are differentiated from generic salutations because the writer addresses each reader separately rather than as a group of subordinates. Company names are very often written with the whole name of the company such as ‘XXX fǎnzhīpǐn gōngsī’ (XXX Textile Company). Titles include ‘fùzé tóngzhǐ’ (person in charge), ‘fǎrén dài biǎo’ (legal representative), and ‘jīnglǐ géxià’ (manager your excellency). These titles are more personal than the generic salutations. As noted in Chapter 4, ‘fùzé tóngzhǐ’ is a rather personal address term to address the right person responsible for sales. ‘Fǎrén dài biǎo’ (legal representative) is almost equivalent in meaning to ‘person in charge’, but it is more formal by addressing the legal responsibility of the person concerned. The formality matches the style of sales ‘tongzhi’. ‘Jīnglǐ géxià’ (manager your Excellency) does not seem to be an appropriate form, because ‘géxià’ is an honorific form often used to address a superior, especially in foreign affairs (Shekeyuan, 1984:372). In other words, it is a ‘shangxing’ address term. Therefore, its usage might be an inappropriate use of register in sales ‘tongzhi’.

All these specific address terms, although different in form, have one similarity, which is to refer to the specific people or company concerned. This way of addressing the reader can have several implications. First, the specific salutations can indicate a language shift in addressing the reader, since the writer appears to pay attention to each company s/he writes to. Second, this may also indicate a shift of economic structure. The writer may not have control over so many companies as before, and therefore has to make sure who the letter is directed to.

5.1.3 The linguistic forms used as polite closings

No closings such as ‘tècǐ tóngzhǐ’ (specially ‘tongzhi’) as emphasised in textbooks advice were found. However, four letters (20%) have polite closings. Here they are called polite closings instead of well-wishes because, although they were placed at the end of the letter, they are not really well-wishes as found in the last two chapters. For example, two

letters use the form of ‘cǐzhǐ’ which is only part of the well-wishes formula ‘cǐzhǐ jǐnglǐ’ (‘with well-wishes’ or ‘to show respects’). It seems that the writer uses ‘cǐzhǐ’ (to show or give), which is only part of ‘cǐzhǐ jǐnglǐ’, to both differentiate from the personal ‘cǐzhǐ jǐnglǐ’ and to realise a polite closing. Two other letters have the polite closing of ‘xièxiè hézuò’ (thank you for your cooperation). Although only seven letters have such closings, they can indicate a shift from ‘tècǐ tōngzhǐ’ (specially ‘tongzhi’) to more polite closings.

All the twenty letters have the date and signature as the final formulaic move to end the letter.

5.1.4 Summary of the formulaic moves

To sum up, the formulaic components employed in the sales ‘tongzhi’ are, generally speaking, consistent with the textbook prescriptions, possibly because sales ‘tongzhi’ are basically written in the form of ‘tongzhi’, a genre which is more or less standardised and is widely accepted by the public. The number of generic salutations is slightly higher than the specific ones, which indicates that sales ‘tongzhi’, on the one hand, still have the generic features; on the other, they also use other non-generic forms, such as personal titles, etc. There is also a tendency to use less formal forms, as seen in the use for headings and polite closing, which may be related to a register change.

5.2 Analysing the content moves

As noted earlier, five kinds of moves can be identified in the corpus. They are: informing the reader about the sales decision or plan, describing the product or service, offering incentives, issuing a ‘tongzhi’ order, and indicating requirements. All these moves are discussed in detail below.

5.2.1 Informing the reader about the sales decision or plan

Move 1, informing the reader about the sales decision or plan, is the opening content move in all the twenty letters in the corpus. It is composed of the following three steps:

Step 1: Providing background information (optional)

Step 2: Indicating background objectives (optional)

Step 3: Introducing the sales decision or plan

In the corpus, all letters introduce the sales decision or plan, six letters (30%) give background information, and twelve letters (60%) indicate background objectives. The first and second step often occur together. Eight letters (40%) do not have either of these steps, and begin with Step 3, the introduction to the sales decision or plan.

The first step often relates to the background situation for writing the sales ‘tongzhi’. For example, one letter about publishing a book, Introduction to World Trade Organisations, introduces the background situation in the following manner:

shǐjiè màoyì zǔzhī jiāng yú 1995 nián chū zhèngshǐ chénglǐ.

world trade organisation will in 1995 year beginning formal establish
wǒguó yì jiāng chéngwèi qí zhèngshǐ chéngyuán guó.

I-country also will become its regular member country

The World Trade Organisation will be formally established at the beginning of 1995.

Our country will also become a regular member country.

The above background information concerns a future situation relating to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) indicated by ‘jiāng’ (will) and the verb ‘chénglǐ’ (establish). This example can be seen as the relevant background information for publishing this book since it is being published to meet the needs arising from this situation. In this way, the writer also attaches importance to the book. This step constitutes a typical formal ‘gongwen’ (official letters) beginning, and six letters (30%) in the corpus include it.

The following two steps, indicating background objectives and introducing the sales decision or plan can be seen in the following example from a letter promoting a computer network:

gēnjù zhōngguó qǐxié de ānpái, wèi

according to China enterprise-association GNE arrangement, in-order-to

fānbàn wǒ shěng qǐyè jiārù gāi xìtǒng, jīng yánjiū

make-things-convenient I province enterprise attend this system after study

juéding jiànlǐ ‘quánguó qǐyè xīnxī jìsuàngǎi wǎngluò xìtǒng
decide set-up nation-wide enterprise information computer network system
Henan shěng fēnzhàn’.

Henan province branch

According to the arrangements of the Chinese Enterprises’ Association, and in order to make things convenient for these enterprises to join in this network, it has been decided after discussion that the Henan Branch of the Chinese Enterprises’ Information Computer Network System will be established.

In the above example, both steps are included in one sentence. The first step is written in two forms: a prepositional phrase introduced by ‘gēnjù’ (according to) and a subordinate clause introduced by ‘wèi’ (in order to). The second step is written in the main clause. Both ‘gēnjù’ (according to) and ‘wèi’ (in order to) are related to the formal register of ‘gongwen’ (official letters), and each can be used independently to introduce a beginning section, as well as together, as shown in the above example.

Two background objectives are mentioned. The first one is introduced by the prepositional phrase ‘gēnjù zhōngguó qǐxié de ānpái’ (according to the arrangements of the Chinese Enterprises’ Association). Some explanation is needed in order to understand this phrase as a background objective. The writer is from a provincial enterprise association, which is under the institutional control of the Chinese Enterprises Association. The writer tries to associate the sales decision with the arrangements made by a higher-level superior, and points out the superior’s power by mentioning a task assigned by the superior. The meaning is that the writer is complementing an objective assigned by a higher authority — the Chinese Enterprises Association. At the same time, the writer also justifies the use of the ‘tongzhi’ genre by telling the reader about the superior’s authority.

The second objective introduced by ‘wèi’ (in order to) refers to offering network services to enterprises. As discussed in the last two chapters, although ‘wèi(le)’ (in order to) is known as a purpose connective, it seldom introduces the main purpose of the letter, but rather introduces a background objective. In the above example, the writer presents the

reader's convenience as a background objective, which is closely related to the sale of the service.

In some letters, however, 'wèi(le)' (in order to) can introduce very remote background objectives, such as 'cùjìn duìwài kāifān' (promote opening-up to foreign countries), etc. This kind of information has become a kind of cliché because of its overuse in 'gongwen' (official letters) and may not achieve the purpose of attracting the reader's interest, but just indicate a formal register. On the other hand, big issues such as 'opening-up' and 'reform' are included in the letter as a means of expressing the 'solemn voice'. By including these as background objectives in sales 'tongzhi', the writer tries not only to attach importance to the decision or plan detailed in the letter, but also to indicate that the 'tongzhi' is consistent with the government's opening-up policies. In addition, the background objectives can also consist of relevant goals, such as providing better services for customers.

The third step, introducing the sales plan or decision, is either placed after the background objectives as in the above example, or at the beginning of the letter as in those that do not have the first two steps. Step 3 is the most important in this move and all the letters in the corpus include it. In the above example, the decision is expressed by the phrase 'jīng yánjiū juéding' (it is decided after discussion). As noted earlier in Section 2 of this chapter, this phrase is frequently used in the 'xiaxing' genre to indicate power and official status. The verb 'juéding' is preceded by the prepositional phrase 'jīng yánjiū' (after discussion). The English translation of 'after discussion' does not carry the full meaning of 'yánjiū', which implies that this decision has been made on the basis of a consultative process and all important persons from the superior organisation have had a say. Only eight letters (40%) in the corpus use this form to encode a sales decision.

The rest of the letters use other forms. For example one letter expresses a decision in this way:

zhōngguó fǎnzhīpǐn	jīnchūchǒu	shānghuì	jiāng	jǐxù
China	textile-product import-export	commerce-association	will	continue

biānjí chūbǎn TOP kānwù.

edit publish TOP journal

The Chinese Commerce Association of Textile Imports and Exports will continue to edit and publish TOP.

In the above example, the plan is indicated as a future action expressed by ‘jiāng’ (will). This word is still related to a decision, but it has a neutral meaning and can be used in both ‘pingxing’ and ‘xiaxing’ genres. As noted in Chapter 5, sales invitations often introduce the exhibition in this form. Here the writer seems to be avoiding the use of the ‘xiaxing’ term ‘juéjǐng’ (decide) or ‘yánjiū’ (after discussion) which have connotations of dominance over the reader. Three letters in the corpus use ‘jiāng’ (will) to indicate a decision.

Other forms used to encode an implicit decision include introducing the name of the product. This will be discussed in Section 8 of this chapter. This way of introducing the sales plan will be called decision-related information. In the corpus, nine letters use this strategy to encode this step. Altogether twelve letters (60%) do not use the typical form of ‘juéjǐng’. The reason for this preference may be that sales ‘tongzhi’ have been influenced by the style of ‘pingxing’ sales genres, and are tending to replace lexical items that represent power and official status. This can mean that the ‘xiaxing’ decision becomes less explicit in some letters of the corpus. This seems to be in conflict with the traditional approach to ‘tongzhi’ writing which emphasises the importance of the ‘solemn voice’. However, if we consider that sales ‘tongzhi’ are undergoing a genre shift, this trend is only natural as sales ‘tongzhi’ may evolve and include some features of ‘pingxing’ sales genres as the result of the more equalitarian roles which have arisen in the economic reform.

5.2.2 Describing the product or service

The second move, introducing the product, is often placed after the sales plan or decision, and is composed of the following two steps:

Step 1 Providing details about the product or service

Step 2 Evaluating the product

The first step gives a detailed introduction to the product or service. For example, one letter provides details about a computer information network as follows:

sān gè xīnxīwǎng chénglǐ wǔnián duō lái, bùduàn fāzhǎn
three Class. information-network establish five-year more since continuous develop
zhuàngdà, mùqián yònghù yǐ chāoguò 1,500 jiā, bìng jiànlǐ le
expand present customer already exceed 1,500 Class. and set-up ASP
1,000 rén de xīnxīyuán duǐwǔ.

1,000 people GNE information-people team

Since the establishment of the three information networks more than five years ago, they have been developing and expanding continuously. At present, they have more than 1,500 customers and have set-up an information-providing team of 1,000 people.

The above example includes some information about the computer network, the prepositional phrase ‘wǔnián duō lái’ (since more than five years ago) indicates that the network has been in service for quite a long time. The verb phrase ‘bùduàn fāzhǎn zhuàngdà’ (develop and expand continuously) highlights the development of this network. These two details are supported by the number of customers and information-providing people.

The above introduction is related to advertising the product. In particular, the statistics seem to be a convincing factor indicating that the software is popular. On the other hand, it shows the writer has some marketing knowledge and knows how to convince the reader using these facts. This kind of product-focused introduction is used in all the twenty letters. This way of presenting details is similar to that found in sales letters, and is a new development for ‘tongzhi’.

However, the writer can also include other status-related factors, such as mentioning or quoting an authority figure’s comments. This is another piece of evidence to indicate that appeal to a superior’s status coexists with product promotion. Take the following quote as an example:

quánguó réndà chángwěihuì fù wěiyuánzhǎng Tian Jiyun
national people's-congress standing-committee vice chairman Tian Jiyun
wèi běnshū tíxiě shūmíng, guówùyuàn fù zǒnglǐ Li Lanqing tící:
for this-book write book-title state-council vice premier Li Lanqing autograph:
“yuàn zhōngguó duìwài jīngmào jīgòu dàquán chéngwèi
hope China foreign economy-trade organisation encyclopedia become
cùjìn zhōngwài jiāoliú fāzhǎn jīngmào hézuò de yǒuyǐ
promote Chinese-foreign exchange develop economy-trade cooperation GNE good
méijiè.”

medium

The deputy Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Congress wrote the title for the cover page of the book. Vice Premier Li Lanqing of the State Council wrote the following words of encouragement: “I hope that The Encyclopaedia of Chinese and Foreign Trade Corporations will become a good medium to promote Chinese and foreign exchange and the development of economics and trade cooperation.”

The above example can be seen as an appeal to authority of superiors. Here two important people are mentioned. They are the Deputy Chairman of the National Committee of China and the Vice Premier of China. These important people are mentioned with their full titles, indicating the official status they have. ‘Tíxiě shūmíng’ (wrote the title for the cover of the book¹⁴) and ‘tící’ (write words of encouragement) are what they did for the book. One may notice that there is a direct quote of the Vice Premier's words. The important point here is that the Premier is interested in this book, and his words are used to give powerful support to the letter and help promote the book. Similar evidence can be found in another sales ‘tongzhi’ which promotes a book of registered brands: 13 important people's endorsements are included on a separate page of the letter. These thirteen people represent various levels of superiors from the Vice Premier to the Chair of the Chinese Enterprises Association. This shows that authorities at various levels all give support to the publication of the book.

¹⁴ In China it is a common practice for titles on the cover of the book to be written by hand by important people.

Nowadays it is a common practice in China to invite important people to write the title for the cover page for newly published books as a means of promotion, or to make comments about other products. The superior's status is used here to promote the product. Such sales 'tongzhi' show that the writer has the social connections to invite these important people to support the product. On the other hand, this practice also indicates that the superior is also involved, in this particular way, in the advertising of the product. However, since this way of introducing a product or service mainly indicates official connections and an appeal to authority, how effectively this can convince the reader is still an open question.

Quoting important people's words occurs only in four letters (20%). Although less than a quarter of the letters have this move, this phenomenon is worth noting because it is a typical 'xiaxing' feature used to indicate official status. This practice can be traced back to ancient times when the emperor's words were to be regarded as always correct and most powerful. This practice was also quite prevalent during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) when Mao's words were very frequently quoted in official documents to indicate their correctness and the support of the supreme authority. The officials' words in sales 'tongzhi' may not have the same power as the emperor's or Mao's words, however, quoting an authority bears some analogy with this practice of using a higher official's status to influence the reader. The infrequent use of superior's support may reflect a genre shift in sales 'tongzhi'. Since the authorities have lost some of their power as a result of the economic opening-up, this practice may not have the same influence upon the reader as before. Perhaps this is the reason why the practice of quoting important people's words is not employed by many letters.

The second step, evaluating the product, is widely used and all the letters in the corpus employ it. Writers of sales 'tongzhi' tend to introduce products by using a series of adjectives and the superlative degree similar to 'pingxing' sales genres. For example, one book promotion letter states:

běn shū de biānzuǎn yuánzé shì, lǐqiú quánmiàn, xīnyǐng, jīngquè,
this book GNE compile principle is strive comprehensive original precise
quánwēi, shíyòng. wúlùn shǐ qí xíngshì huò nèiróng háishì qí shíyòng
authoritative practical no-matter be its form or content or its practical

jiàzhí huò xuéshù lǐlùn jiàzhí, běn shū dōu shì chāo yīliú de
value or academic theory value this book both be super No. 1 GNE
jīngpǐng.

exquisite product

The compiling principle of this book is: strive to be comprehensive, original, precise
and authoritative. This book is super No. 1 of its kind in both form and content, in
both practical value and theoretical value.

In the above example, the writer gives two kinds of positive evaluation. The first praises the principles which the editor tries to follow. These are described by five adjectives:

‘quánmiàn’ (comprehensive), ‘xīnyǐng’ (original), ‘jīngquè’ (precise), ‘quánwēi’ (authoritative), and ‘shíyòng’ (practical). These five adjectives function as complements to the verb ‘fìqiú’ (strive). The second kind of positive evaluation is related to the quality of the book indicated by the phrase ‘chāo yīliú’ (super No. 1). The phrase ‘chāo yīliú’ is very close in meaning to the superlative degree of ‘zuǐ hǎo’ (best), and can be seen as the emotive way of saying ‘zuǐ hǎo’, because the character ‘chāo’ has the meaning of being superb. However, ‘chāo yīliú’ is only the writer’s subjective evaluation of the book as really good and is not supported by any facts to prove the appraisal. In spite of this, it is an acceptable writing practice in advertising, as unsupported appraisals are often found in ‘pingxing’ sales genres discussed in the last two chapters. This advertising strategy employed in sales ‘tongzhi’ can be seen as an influence from ‘pingxing’ sales genres.

5.2.3 Offering incentives

The third move, offering incentives, is composed of the following two steps:

Step 1 Indicating the benefits the product or service may bring

Step 2 Offering a special price, or giving a free gift

Only four letters in the corpus (20%) offer incentives for their products. This move is often placed after ‘describing the product’. These four letters tend to use one of the above steps, and only one letter uses both of them.

The first step tells the reader about what benefits the product or service can bring. For example, one letter soliciting advertisements for a special issue of a journal writes:

gāi zhuāncān jiāng bùfēn jǐsòng guówài màoyì gōngsī jí
this special-issue will part send foreign trade company and
shāngshè.

commerce-association

Copies of this special issue will be sent to foreign trade companies and commercial associations.

In the above example, the verbs ‘jiāng jǐsòng’ (will be sent) refer to a future plan the writer is going to implement. The whole sentence shows that the special issue will be sent to foreign countries, and this can be seen as an implicit incentive. The writer does not explain the benefits, but these can be understood in terms of the importance of co-operation with foreign enterprises as a part of the economic opening-up. Readers who have their products advertised in this special issue would have their advertisements read by foreign enterprises who might be interested in these products. In this way, the above sentence is seen as an incentive to establish a potential link with foreign enterprises.

The second step makes a special offer, or gives a free gift. One letter promoting a computer CD-Rom offers a free gift this way:

guāngpán zhǐchéng hòu xiàng cānjiā dānwèi zèngsòng
CD manufacture afterwards to participate company give-as-gift
guāngpán liang tao.

CD two set

When the CD is manufactured, the participating companies will be given two sets of CDs as a gift.

In the above example, the letter offers the reader a free gift as expressed in the verb ‘zèngsòng’ (give as a gift). Although the writer has the official status of a superior, s/he also wants to give the reader some incentive to accept the forthcoming order in the letter.

Both of the above incentives are strategies found in ‘pingxing’ sales genres. Although only four letters (20%) in the corpus use this move, this appears to be another piece of evidence of genre shift in which the writer uses a strategy also used in writing sales letters.

5.2.4 Issuing a ‘tongzhi’ order

The fourth move, issuing a ‘tongzhi’ order, is placed after ‘describing the product’ or, sometimes, after ‘offering incentives’, and is composed of the following two steps:

Step 1 Making an implicit order

Step 2 Using pressure tactics

The two steps often follow the above sequence. However, sometimes, they can also follow a reversed sequence. The first step is often expressed in unconditional imperative sentences introduced by ‘qǐng’ (please) and ‘xīwàng’ or ‘wàng’ (hope). In fact, nineteen letters (95%) use these forms as shown in the following examples.

(1) qǐng gè dānwèi zhuājīn bànlǐ rùwǎng jí dīngyuè shǒuxù.

please every company seize time handle join-network and subscribe formality.

Please all companies be quick to go through enrolment and subscription formalities.

(2) wàng gè dānwèi yǔyǐ zhòngshǐ, zhuājīn bànlǐ rùwǎng shǒuxù.

hope every company give attention seize-time handle join-network procedure

(We) hope every company will pay attention to it (the network) and be quick to go through enrolment formalities.

In the above two examples, ‘qǐng’ (please) and ‘wàng’ or ‘xīwàng’ (hope) are used to introduce an implicit order. The above sentences may not appear to be orders because ‘qǐng

‘and ‘wàng’ are also used in ‘pingxing’ sales genres to introduce a request, as noted in the last two chapters. However, if we link their use to achieving a polite official image, we can understand their deliberate use to make the ‘tongzhi’ order implicit. In fact, the force of an order is mainly expressed by other generic lexical items. For example, in the first sentence, it is the phrase ‘gè dānwèi zhuājīn bànlǐ’ (every company be quick to enrol) that expresses a generic ‘xiaxing’ order. This phrase sounds obligatory in Chinese, and the reader is not given any options to decline what s/he is asked to do. In addition, the reader is addressed as ‘gè dānwèi’ which is often used by a superior to address subordinates. As noted earlier in this chapter, ‘zhuājīn’ meaning ‘to be quick’ is a typical element in ‘xiaxing’ register which indicates that a superior expects a subordinate to make a quick response. These ‘xiaxing’ lexical items contradict the use of ‘qǐng’ (please). However, it is the contradictory combination of the ‘xiaxing’ elements and ‘qǐng’ (please) that makes the order implicit, and this is very typical of the orders made in ‘tongzhi’. The reason for this contradiction is that on the one hand, the writer tries to express a ‘solemn voice’ through an order; on the other hand, the writer softens the ‘solemn voice’ by using ‘qǐng’. If we relate ‘qǐng’ to the world schema connected with the nature of a modest official image, the function of this form can be easily understood, which is to make the order sound less harsh.

The same principle applies to the second example. In this sentence, there is another typical order-related term, ‘yǔyǐ zhòngshǐ’ (pay attention to the network), in addition to ‘zhuājīn bànlǐ’ (to be quick to enrol). These terms are used to tell a subordinate to pay attention to what the superior has said. These terms also contrast with the use of ‘wàng’ (hope) which expresses a hope or expectation. The writer tries to achieve both the ‘solemn voice’ and a modest attitude through this combination. ‘Qǐng’ and ‘(xī)wàng’ thus can be seen as showing that writers prefer to use polite forms to make the orders implicit.

The use of polite language is very much encouraged in Chinese writing theories. For example, as noted earlier in this chapter, Xu (1987:34) explains that whether one is writing to a subordinate or a superior, the writer should pay attention to the use of polite language, such as ‘qǐng’ (please) and ‘(xī)wàng’ (hope) to reflect a ‘píngděng’ (equal) relationship between the superior and the subordinates. Here ‘píngděng’ (equal) is used to indicate the

polite use of language in writing, not the institutional distance. Sales ‘tongzhi’ in the corpus tend to use ‘qǐng’ (please) and ‘(xǐ)wàng’ (hope) to introduce implicit orders. While ‘wàng’ and ‘qǐng’ are more or less symbols of modest attitudes, what really counts as an order is the lexical items that follow them. Although these two forms are also typical ‘tongzhi’ order forms, as noted earlier in this chapter, their frequent use in sales ‘tongzhi’ can indicate a preference for polite forms, as there are many other ‘tongzhi’ forms more explicitly related to orders.

Only one letter uses the explicit order form ‘yào’ (have to), a typical ‘tongzhi’ form, as noted in Section 3 of this chapter. However, this form is also used in combination with other lexical items to weaken the explicitness of the order as shown below:

gè yǒuguān dānwèi yào lǐjī xíngdòng, zìyuàn cānjiā.
every concern company have-to enthusiastic take-action voluntary participate
Every company concerned has to enthusiastically take action and voluntarily participate.

In the above, the writer makes an explicit order by using the typical ‘xiaxing’ modal verb ‘yào’ (have to); but at the same time, s/he uses ‘zìyuàn’ (voluntarily) to weaken the force of the order. In fact, ‘yào’ and ‘zìyuàn’ are contradictory lexical items. ‘Yào’ expresses an order to the reader and gives the reader no choice but to accept the order. ‘Zìyuàn’ indicates willingness or choice. By using ‘zìyuàn’, the writer is trying to imply that the reader has some choice, and indicate that s/he is not forcing the reader into acceptance of an order. In spite of the illogicality, ‘yào’ and ‘zìyuàn’ are sometimes used together in this ‘xiaxing’ genre to make the order less harsh.

The second step, using pressure tactics, is often closely linked to the implicit order. Take the following as an example:

qǐng yú jiēdào běn tōngzhī zhī rì qǐ shírì nèi lái hán
please from receive this tongzhi GNE date on ten-day within write-letter

liánxǐ, guòqī bù yǔ bàn lǐ.

contact exceed-time will-not handle

Please contact us within ten days after you receive this ‘tongzhi’. (We) will not handle cases after the deadline.

The implicit order is introduced by a common form found in sales ‘tongzhi’: ‘qǐng’ + imperative sentence. Step 2, using pressure tactics, is expressed in the second sentence ‘guòqī bù yǔ bàn lǐ’ (we will not handle cases after the deadline). As noted in Section 2 of this chapter, ‘bù yǔ’ (refuse) is a typical ‘xiaxing’ verb. It is used here to indicate the writer’s power or control over the situation. The writer can drop the reader’s case if s/he fails to contact the writer within the ten-day deadline. This pressure tactic, therefore, indicates the reader may face a loss of opportunity. Only two letters in the corpus use this kind of tactic.

Another letter (to be discussed as the least successful letter in this chapter) expresses the two steps in a similar way, but instead of pointing out a possible loss of opportunity, the writer promises the reader an opportunity.

A third kind of pressure tactic is related to time pressures (to be discussed as the most successful letter in this chapter). This is a common practice found in sales letters, and is used in two sales ‘tongzhi’. Its use may indicate an influence from sales letters. Among these three pressure tactics, the first and the second are ‘xiaxing’ types as they indicate the power of the writer, while the third is a new trend which indicates the use of a marketing strategy rather than an authority-based strategy.

5.2.5 Indicating requirements to carry out the order

The fifth move, indicating requirements to carry out the order, seems to be optional, and occurs in ten letters (50%) in the corpus. This move can be seen as an important feature in ‘tongzhi’ writing in that it outlines practical steps the reader has to follow. For example, one letter states these requirements as follows:

fán cānjiā běn wǎng de dānwèi, wù qǐng àn yāoqiú rènzhēn
all participate this network GNE company must please follow requirement serious

tiánxiě dēngjǐkǎ, bīng xuǎnpài yī míng rènzhēn fùzhé de
 fill-in registration-form and select-send one Class. serious responsible GNE
 tóngzhǐ dānrèn xīnxīyuán, yǐbiàn běn wǎng suíshí yǔ zhī
 comrade hold-post information-person so-that this network any-time with him/her
 gōutōng xīnxī.

communicate information

All companies who will join the network must (please) follow the requirements seriously when filling in the registration form, and selecting one responsible person to be the contact person, so that this network can communicate with him/her at any time.

As shown in the above example, two main requirements are made: ‘tiánxiě dēngjǐkǎ’ (fill in registration form), and ‘xuǎnpài xīnxīyuán’ (select a contact person). The requirements in the above example are introduced by the term ‘wù qǐng’ (must please), which is composed of the typical *xiaxing* ‘wù’ combined with ‘qǐng’. This is an interesting combination, as ‘wù’ (must) is a typical ‘*xiaxing*’ form to indicate obligation, and would not normally be used with ‘qǐng’ (please). No dictionaries, to my knowledge, have listed this form. However, it is found in the corpus in three letters¹⁵. The meaning of this form can be explained by referring to the contradictory meanings of the two characters: ‘wù’ indicates obligation while ‘qǐng’ (please) is a softener. Thus ‘wù qǐng’ is used when the writer wants to indicate politely that the requirements are obligatory. If we refer back to the contradictory combinations found in expressing implicit orders, this combination is another instance which shows that the writer prefers polite forms to impose an obligation. However, unlike ‘qǐng’ and ‘wàng’, ‘wù qǐng’ can be seen as an indication of a genre shift in sales ‘tongzhi’ because this term appears to be only used in modern sales ‘tongzhi’. This change is consistent with the preference for a polite register, and may also be related to the change of the communicative purpose towards a more polite public image.

¹⁵ Here it needs to point out that the use of ‘wù qǐng’ may not be limited to sales ‘tongzhi’, and can be used in other genres when there is such a need to express a similar meaning.

Other forms used to indicate requirements include ‘wùbǐ’ (must), ‘bùdé’ (disallowed), ‘wàng’ (hope) and ‘qǐng’ (please). ‘Wùbǐ’ is used in two letters, ‘bùdé’ in one letter, ‘wàng’ or ‘qǐng’ in six letters. Here there is some overlap, as one letter may use more than one form. As noted in Section 3 of this chapter, all four forms are typical ‘tongzhi’ forms, but there is a tendency for more polite forms such as ‘qǐng’ or ‘wàng’ to be more frequently used, just as is the case with the forms used to issue orders. This once again confirms our claims for a growing preference for more polite forms in sales ‘tongzhi’.

5.2.6 Summary of the content moves

First, some moves appear to be obligatory, while others are optional. ‘Informing the reader about the sales decision or plan’, ‘describing the product’ and ‘issuing a tongzhi order’ appear to be obligatory, as all the twenty letters have these moves. ‘Offering incentives’ and ‘indicating requirements’ seem to be optional since only some letters in the corpus have them. The sequence of the moves tends to develop from ‘informing the reader about the sales plan’ towards ‘the implicit order’, and ‘requirements to carry out the order’.

Some steps, too, seem to be obligatory while others are optional. In the first move, the step ‘introducing the sales decision’ is obligatory, while the other two steps, ‘providing background information’ and ‘indicating background objectives’, appear to be optional.

Since sales ‘tongzhi’ have a dual nature, including both sales and ‘tongzhi’, there is a tendency for them to coordinate the features of both ‘tongzhi’ and sales letters. The first move still retains ‘tongzhi’ features, such as introducing a sales decision or plan. However, this can be introduced by using ‘pingxing’ lexical items, in addition to the usual ‘tongzhi’ way, when a writer does not want to appear to be forcing sales upon a subordinate.

In the second move, ‘introducing the product’, the typical ‘tongzhi’ feature of relying on the authority of the writer is not so frequently used in sales ‘tongzhi’, and the writer pays more attention to the introduction of the product or service itself. This means that the writer relies mainly on the good points of the product or service to persuade the reader rather than the official status of the writer, although the latter is still employed in the corpus to a certain extent.

The presence of a move ‘offering incentives’ indicates another influence from promotion. Although this move is optional, it is quite an important feature indicating that

sales ‘tongzhi’ use marketing strategies to promote products. ‘Offering incentives’ would be unnecessary in a centrally planned economy, but are important in a market economy. This also shows that optional moves are not necessarily unimportant, for they may reflect a genre shift.

6 Questionnaire results and interviews relating to top-down processing

In order to provide validity for the above analysis, especially the change of this genre, questionnaires and interviews were conducted among two groups of native speakers of enterprise managers and business writing students (see Chapter 3). As noted earlier in this chapter, there is a gap between the textbook advice and business practices in writing sales ‘tongzhi’, and no textbooks note any change in this genre. This section will examine whether there is a gap between the views of the two groups of native speakers, and whether they are aware of the changes taking place in the genre. If there is a gap, is it related to different understandings of communicative purposes of this genre, and will this gap affect their views concerning the lower levels of the text?

The questionnaires and interviews focused on various levels of the text in an attempt to answer the above questions in the following analysis. Firstly, the students’ and managers’ views on communicative purposes will be examined. Secondly, the preferences of each group in relation to formulaic moves will be analysed. Thirdly, the preferences of each group for various linguistic forms used in salutations will also be discussed.

6.1 Questionnaire results on communicative purposes

Only the major purposes will be examined in the following discussion (see Appendix 2). These are ‘achieving the writer’s official status’, ‘establishing a positive public image’, ‘attracting reader’s interest’, and ‘persuading the reader’, referred to as ‘official status’, ‘positive public image’, ‘attracting interest’ and ‘persuasiveness’ in the following discussion. In the questionnaire, both groups were asked to grade these four purposes as 1 (very important), 2 (quite important), 3 (not so important), and 4 (not important). The results of each group are shown in the following figures below:

Figure 14. The students' preferences (%)

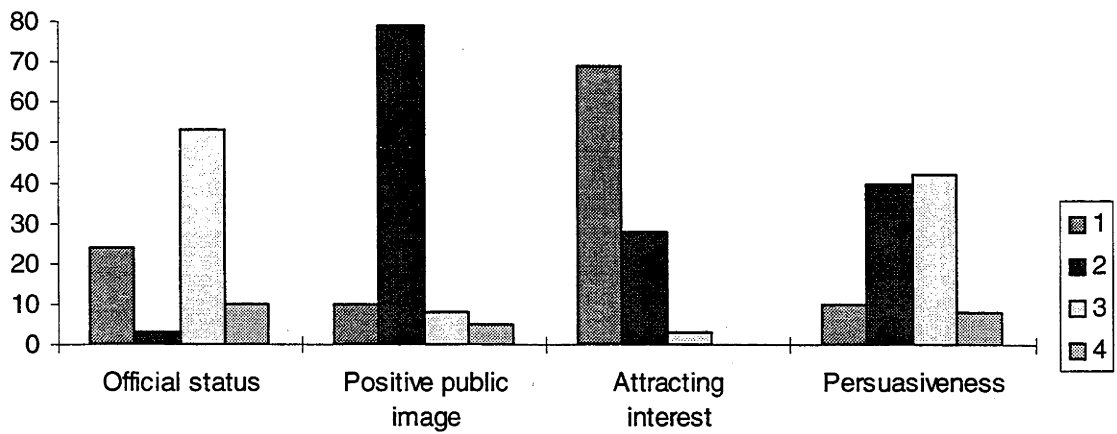
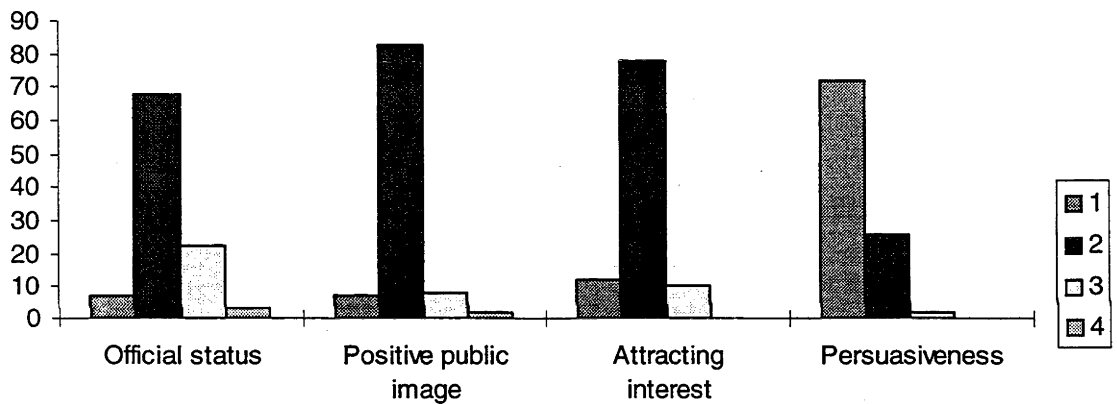


Figure 15. The managers' preferences (%)



NOTE: The columns numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 stand for the four grades: 1 stands for 'very important', 2 for 'quite important', 3 for 'not so important' and 4 for 'not important'. The vertical axis shows the percentage of each group who chose each grade.

The above figures show that the students and managers shared similarities only in grading 'positive public image'. They differed in all the other three purposes. Concerning official status, more than half of the managers (68%) chose the 'quite important' degree, while about half of the students (53%) chose 'not so important', and about a quarter of the students (24%) chose 'very important'. Most students (69%) chose the 'very important' degree for 'attracting interest', but more than half (67%) of the managers chose 'quite important' and 18% chose 'not so important'. Similarly, a difference was found in grading

‘persuasiveness’. On the one hand, the great majority (90%) of the managers chose ‘important’ or ‘very important’, while only slightly more than half (55%) of the students chose these two degrees. On the other hand, 45% of the students chose the ‘not so important’ or ‘not important’ degrees. The results of the above questionnaire show that the students and managers differ significantly in their views of the importance of these communicative purposes.

6.2 Interviews on understanding the communicative purposes

Both the students and managers graded ‘positive public image’ similarly, and they all agreed that achieving a positive public image was related to basic cultural protocol. It was especially important for senior officials to show adequate politeness to a subordinate. The focus of the interviews was therefore placed on the other three communicative purposes: official status, attracting interest, and persuasiveness.

The students seemed to reflect some conflicting views. On the one hand, about a quarter of them thought ‘official status’ was very important because a ‘tongzhi’ should express a ‘solemn voice’ as the textbook advice stressed. On the other hand, just over half of the students (53%) thought ‘official status’ was not important and an emphasis on this would create a feeling that the writer was trying to use his/her power to push the sale of the product. They said that these days people did not like to be told to do things. The reader could make up his/her own mind about whether to buy a product or not. There was no point trying to influence the reader with power or official status. Therefore, the writer should be modest and have an equal relationship with the reader, as discussed in the textbooks. They did not seem to distinguish between institutional distance and linguistic distance and understood ‘equal’ as institutional distance, while the textbooks appear to refer to polite distance expressed by the language.

Their attitude of emphasising ‘equality’ may reflect a common social attitude among young people towards official status. From 1949-78, China went through a lot of political movements, and authorities at various levels used to tell the people what was right and what was wrong. Many people, especially the young and educated, nowadays tend to adopt a less-respectful attitude towards power and authority. The students seem to transfer this kind of attitude towards official status to sales ‘tongzhi’ writing.

However most of the students went on to ignore the important features of this genre and to confuse it with sales letters, because establishing the writer's official status is a purpose characteristic of a 'tongzhi', including a sales 'tongzhi', as shown by managers and textbook writers.

The students' response concerning 'official status' also appears to be related to their world knowledge about changes in the social context. They did not seem to be fully aware of these changes. For example, the introduction of the market economy into the Chinese economic structure does not mean that the planned economy is replaced, but rather it means both of these structures have been integrated in the system. If this is not understood, one cannot understand why 'official status' is still necessary for sales 'tongzhi'.

A kind of confusion can also be seen in the students' views on 'attracting interest' and 'persuasiveness', as their views here were quite similar to those for sales letters. The students thought that 'attracting interest' was very important because, as a seller, the writer should attract the reader's interest in the product. If the reader was interested, s/he would respond to the letter quickly and ask for further information. One student said, "the major criterion for judging an effective sales 'tongzhi' is to see if the letter can attract the reader's interest". Since they placed so much emphasis on 'attracting interest', the students thought 'persuasiveness' was not very important, and the writer should target 'attracting reader's interest' as the major purpose. This view once again supports the claim that the students tend to confuse sales 'tongzhi' with sales letters.

The students' views may show that they have failed to follow closely the changes of the economic structure, or they have failed to understand the integration of the market and planned economies.

The managers disagreed with the students and thought sales 'tongzhi' was a special kind of sales in which a superior wrote to a subordinate. Therefore, achieving the writer's official status was important to justify why a 'tongzhi' was being used to promote sales. One manager explained that his company received a sales 'tongzhi' to promote a book, but this letter was not written by his superiors. In the end, the sales offer was turned down because they thought the writer was not in a position to use 'tongzhi' to promote sales. On the other hand, he continued, if the writer was entitled to use 'tongzhi' to promote sales, but failed to indicate clearly what official status s/he had, the reader could also doubt why the promotion

of a product should be written in 'tongzhi' form. Therefore establishing the writer's official status is quite important for sales 'tongzhi'. In addition, the description of this status would also help the reader to act on the implicit orders the writer makes in the letter.

The managers, however, did not think that too much information should be included in the background information as justifications for the order. Instead, the writer should briefly tell the reader what level of authority the writer had for using 'tongzhi' and should avoid excessively publicising their official status. They further explained that paying too much attention to this purpose could bring some conflict with establishing a positive public image, and create a feeling that the writer was not modest enough. It could also conflict with 'persuasiveness'. One manager said that writers should be careful not to excessively emphasise their official status. Otherwise the sales 'tongzhi' could suggest that the writer used too much 'xǐngzhèng gānyù' (official interference), and this letter would possibly not achieve its effectiveness as a convincing 'xiaxing' letter. The four-character expression, 'xǐngzhèng gānyù' (official interference) is a common saying today to indicate that official status is over-emphasised and the reader is forced to accept something without choice.

Here the managers' attitudes raise an important theoretical issue: the relative rules of official interference and equalitarian argumentation based on qualities of the product. This conflict can be explained again by the dual-nature of the economic structure. On the one hand the planned economy stresses the importance of the hierarchy as it existed in the de-linking period (1949-78). As noted in Chapter 1, this period was characterised by unequal practices in buying and selling, in which a subordinate could only have access to, and was required to take, what was given by superiors. On the other hand, there now exists influence from the opposing force of equal marketing practice between the buyer and the seller. In this case, individual's decisions play an important role. The seller will only buy when there is a need. Sales 'tongzhi' exhibit both of these elements to persuade the reader. As a result, the managers thought there was a need to balance the conflict between these elements.

Since the managers had the ability to balance the relationship between these communicative purposes, they could deal with 'attracting interest' and 'persuasiveness' in a more appropriate way. They thought that 'attracting interest' was not very important. First of all, the letter concerned was a 'xiaxing' sales letter, and the 'xiaxing' genre itself already attracted the interest of the reader as a letter from a superior which requires action from the

subordinate. They thought that although the writer could still try to attract the reader's interest by other means, s/he should not over-emphasise this point. The focus of importance should be placed on persuading the reader to buy the product. They believed that the only thing that would be persuasive was the quality and popularity of the product. Therefore the writer had to work hard on 'persuasiveness' and target it as the major purpose of the sales 'tongzhi'.

In addition, they explained that 'persuasiveness' in sales 'tongzhi' was especially important as the letter was an order. If the reader was not convinced about the good quality, the writer would not have a positive image, because the reader could have a feeling that the writer was using his/her power alone to promote the product. In this way, the purpose of 'persuasiveness' was related to the other purposes and it was important that the writer should solve the conflicts among them.

The above conflicts are not mentioned in textbooks. The managers' views not only point out the conflicts but also possible ways of solving them.

To sum up, the students and managers differed in their views on 'official status', 'attracting interest', and 'persuasiveness'. The interviews indicate that these differences mainly lie in the fact that the managers are more aware of the transitional economic changes and the way they relate to the communicative purposes of sales 'tongzhi'. The students, however, do not seem to understand these changes fully, and base their views upon either textbook advice or on their general attitudes to authority. Although sales 'tongzhi' are in a transitional stage, they are by no means being confused, or replaced with sales letters. They unmistakably stand out as a 'xiaxing' sales genre due to the attention paid to establishing 'official status'. Therefore, ignoring this purpose is to confuse it with sales letters. The managers have a full understanding of the communicative purposes, and they are in control of the genre change. They know how to resolve the resulting conflicts among communicative purposes. The students, however, tend to confuse the communicative purposes of sales 'tongzhi' with those of sales letters, even though their attitudes may indicate that they are aware of the social changes.

6.3 Questionnaire results on the use of formulaic moves

This section will discuss the questionnaire results for moves, steps and linguistic forms used as formulaic components. The purpose is to find whether the divergence in the native speakers’ understandings of communicative purposes leads to different views at these lower levels of the text. The questionnaire results on the use of headings, salutations, greetings and polite closings are shown below:

Table 12. Native speakers’ preferences for formulaic components

	Heading		Salutation		Greeting		Polite closing	
Responses	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Students %	92	8	94	6	0	100	42	58
Managers %	97	3	97	3	4	96	73	27

Note: Yes = Positive attitude; No = Negative attitude.

As shown in the above table, the two groups generally agreed on the use of headings, salutations, and the non-use of greetings. They mainly differed on whether sales ‘tongzhi’ should have polite closings. Less than half of the students (42%) approved their use, while the opposite was true of the managers, the majority of whom (73%) approved their use and only 27% disapproved.

Both the students and managers’ choices regarding the use of headings, salutations and greetings were very close to the textbook prescriptions and the findings in the corpus. These preferences therefore represent general conventions of writing sales ‘tongzhi’. However, the students’ disapproval of polite closings follows textbook advice. In contrast, the managers’ approval of them, to a certain degree, reflects the findings in the corpus and disagrees with textbook advice, suggesting that textbook writers are out of touch with current practice.

6.4 Interviews on the preferences for formulaic components

Since both groups indicated similar views on the use of headings, salutations, and greetings, the interviews focused on the use of polite closings. More than half of the students seemed to rely on textbook advice and disapproved of the use of polite closings. They

thought that ‘tongzhi’ were formal ‘gongwen’ (official letters) and should not include polite closings. If polite closings were included, the formality would be reduced.

Although the managers agreed that sales ‘tongzhi’ were a type of ‘gongwen’ (official letter), the majority still thought that polite closings should be used because the level of formality was lower when compared to a bureaucratic ‘tongzhi’. In addition, managers who supported the use of polite closings could relate their use to ‘establishing a public image’. One manager said that if polite closings were appropriately used in sales ‘tongzhi’, the reader would think that the writer was polite and modest, and this was an important image if one wanted to win the subordinates’ trust.

The managers also explained that the use of polite closings was a basic requirement when writing any letter. Since sales ‘tongzhi’ are letters, they should have polite closings. Textbooks do not include polite closings because the authors believe that ‘tongzhi’ are first of all solemn forms of writing. As He and LÜ (1991) point out, the ending should be related to the content and should not use polite closings, which would lessen the solemnness of the letter. However, the managers thought the opposite was true, and polite closings should be used in sales ‘tongzhi’. From these questionnaire results, it seems that the managers are challenging textbooks about the appropriate degree of formality involved in sales ‘tongzhi’.

6.5 The preferred linguistic forms for salutations

This section examines salutations as a typical example of using linguistic forms. The native speakers in each group were asked to grade (between grades 1-5) the salutations found in the corpus. Only the translated forms of salutations are included for the ease of discussion. The Chinese forms have been discussed in 5.1.2 of this chapter. The highest mean score shows the most appropriate, the lowest the least appropriate. The results for each salutation are shown in Table 13:

Table 13. The results of rating (mean score) on the preferences of salutations

Salutation	Students	Rank	Managers	Rank
1 Company name	4.14	1	4.3	1
2 Person in charge	3.15	3	3.3	2
3 Generic salutations	3.82	2	2.87	3
4 ∅ salutation	1.2	5	2.11	4
5 Your Excellency	2.4	4	1.19	5

The above table shows that both groups agreed on the most preferred address term, and rated ‘company name’ the highest: 4.14 for students and 4.3 for managers. However, they differed in their ranking of the other four address terms. For example, the students rated ‘∅ salutation’ as the least preferred, and ‘your excellency’ the second least preferred, while the managers reversed the ranking order by rating ‘your Excellency’ the least preferred, and ‘∅ salutation’ the second least preferred. Follow-up interviews explored the reasons for these differences.

When interviewed, both groups thought that sales ‘tongzhi’ were a type of ‘gongwen’ (official letters), and should have ‘company name’ as a salutation to meet the formality of the letter. In addition to this, the managers further explained that sales ‘tongzhi’ were a ‘xiaxing genre’ directed to a subordinate company, and ‘company names’ could best reflect the relationship between the writer and the reader. It seems that the managers paid more attention to the reader- writer relationship.

As regards the differences in the ranking order of the other four address terms, the views of the two groups revealed the different criteria they follow. The students thought generic salutations such as ‘gè yǒuguān dānwèi’ (every company concerned) were similar to company names and therefore they rated them as second most favoured. The students rated the ‘∅ salutation’ the lowest, and thought that as a letter, sales ‘tongzhi’ should have a salutation. It was their formal schema for letters which required salutations. Therefore they rated ‘your Excellency’ higher than ‘∅ salutation’.

In contrast, the managers had different views on the use of generic address forms from the students. The managers thought that these forms were different from specific company names because the generic salutations indicate a 'xiaxing' register, while specific company names do not have such an indication. They explained that although it was quite prevalent to use generic salutations in sales 'tongzhi', they thought it would be more appropriate to use specific company names to pay specific attention to each company. Since sales 'tongzhi' were related to sales, the writer should treat the reader not only as a subordinate, but also as a customer. For similar reasons, 'person in charge' as a specific address form was rated the second most preferred. They agreed that 'person in charge' could represent the responsibilities of the person representing the company and therefore, was appropriate as a salutation. They rated 'your Excellency' the least preferred. They thought that this honorific address term used in sales 'tongzhi' was highly inappropriate because it was often used in 'shangxing' genres to show respect to a senior person. It would not reflect the politeness required by sales 'tongzhi'. As one manager commented, it was not only inappropriate, but also absurd to pay such a high level of respect to a subordinate. The writer lowered himself/herself too much in this position, and this would harm the public image of the superior. Among the two least preferred salutations, they preferred 'ø salutation' to 'your Excellency', because 'ø salutation' showed incompleteness of form or a lack of degree in politeness, while the use of 'your Excellency' would suggest an inappropriate use of polite language. Of course, according to the managers, neither of these two were appropriate. However, they said if they were given the choice between the two, they preferred no salutation to a salutation which would negatively affect the reader-writer relationship. The managers' views highlight the issue that a form would be inappropriate if it hinders the realisation of communicative purposes.

To sum up, the students and managers shared some similarities in their preferences for formulaic moves and the forms of salutation. The reasons for this may reflect the fact that some of the textbook guidelines happen to be very close to the forms actually used in business communication, as noted earlier. However, this coincidence does not mean that the students and managers have equal understanding of the communicative purposes of sales 'tongzhi'. Sometimes the criteria they follow are not the same. This happens even in the case when they make similar choices, such as in the use of address terms. The students preferred

to follow textbook advice and could not relate their views very well to communicative purposes, while the managers could refer to the reader-writer relationship and communicative purposes better.

7 Summary of genre changes found in sales ‘tongzhi’

We have discussed how sales ‘tongzhi’ are evolving along with changes in the economic structure. The changes in sales ‘tongzhi’ can be summarised along several parameters, such as communicative purposes, moves and steps and linguistic forms. These can be discussed in a top-down manner as the lower form changes are mainly caused by the changes of communicative purposes. Here only the genre changes relating to communicative purposes and content moves will be summarised, for a summary of formulaic changes has already been given in 5.1.4 of this chapter.

First of all, the justification for the use of ‘tongzhi’ appears to have changed. In the past, it was important to justify the order so that the reader would be convinced of its fairness. Now, in sales ‘tongzhi’, ‘justification’ is only needed to indicate why ‘tongzhi’ should be used to promote the product.

An emphasis has been placed on new communicative purposes such as ‘attracting the reader’s interest’, ‘giving positive appraisals to the product’ and ‘persuading the reader about the good value of the product’. Similar purposes are also found in sales letters as a means of promotion. Their emergence in sales ‘tongzhi’ indicates that even a seller of superior status has to follow the rules of marketing rather than those based on authority.

Among the above three new purposes, ‘persuading the reader about the good value of the product’ is the most important, because this seems to be the link that reconciles the ‘tongzhi’ order and the promotion. Through this, the writer indicates that the product is itself good, the reader would buy it willingly, and that the product can be sold not only because of the force of a ‘tongzhi’ order. Using such persuasion was irrelevant in the delinking period when sales ‘tongzhi’ were used to complement sales policies, as noted in Chapter 1.

A similar change is found in the purpose relating to a positive public image. The public image the writer tries to achieve is becoming more polite than before. This is because

under the influence of the market economy the control a superior has over the reader may not be as powerful as before.

The changes in communicative purposes have also led to changes in lower levels of the text. First of all, new moves and steps have begun to emerge in this genre. For example, ‘describing the product or service’ is frequently related to sales strategies, such as ‘providing details of the product’ and ‘evaluating the product’, although traditional ‘tongzhi’ strategies, such as using a superior official’s quote, can still be found to a certain degree. In addition, ‘offering incentives’ is found in the corpus as a sales strategy. All these moves and steps are also found in sales letters as an important means of promotion. Their use in sales ‘tongzhi’ is by no means coincidence, as they can be related to the change of purposes relating to marketing strategies.

The linguistic forms are also changing. In making a sales decision, less explicit forms are preferred. For example, typical ‘xiangxing’ decision-related verbs such as ‘juédìng’ (decide) are used by less than half of the letters in the corpus. This may indicate that the writer does not want to appear to sound too much like an authority figure when introducing a product.

Orders and requirements are found to use more polite forms. For example, among the group of ‘tongzhi’ lexical items such as ‘yào’ (have to), ‘bùdé’ (disallowed), ‘wùbǐ’ (must), ‘qǐng’ (please) and ‘wàng’ (hope); ‘qǐng’ and ‘wàng’ are the most frequently used forms for both orders and requirements. This may indicate a change in preference for more polite forms. A new lexical item ‘wùqǐng’ has emerged to indicate both obligation and politeness.

All the above aspects contribute to the genre change in sales ‘tongzhi’. These changes are systematic because there is a close relationship between the social context and the communicative purposes. The lower level changes reflect the changes in communicative purposes, which in turn, reflect social changes. Therefore, genre evolution of sales ‘tongzhi’ follows its own principles, and new forms that match these principles are used.

8 Analysing the most and least successful letters

In this section, the most and least successful letters from the corpus will be analysed using the top-down model. As discussed in Chapter 3, five letters were selected from the

corpus for the managers to grade. The most successful letter is Letter 6, with a mean score of 4.12, and the least successful letter is Letter 12, with a mean score of 1.34. The structure of both letters is analysed below and the managers' views are integrated into the analysis. Only translations of the two letters are provided here, and the original can be found in Appendix 1.

8.1 The analysis of the most successful letter

Letter 6

Urgent Renewal ‘Tongzhi’

For Enterprises who have Entered into the English CECDB’93 and CD-ROM Database to Enter into the Chinese and English CECDB’94 and CD-ROM Database

Person in charge:

The Chinese Enterprises, Corporations, and Products Database (CECDB) has been, under the auspices of the National Science Committee, established jointly with information distribution organisations both inside and outside the country, by the Research Institute of Chinese Science and Technology Information (the Information Centre of the National Science Committee). This database is distributed both inside and outside our country via computer systems, networks and CDs. CECDB constantly provides information for those who are entered in this database, and provides an indexing service for customers all over the world, with a precise indexing system and speedy information distribution. As a means of effective advertising and reliable business information, CECDB has forcefully promoted business for both national and foreign products, and various kinds of cooperation. This database won third prize of Technological Progress from the National Science Committee, and first prize for Information Achievement of Chinese Science and Technology. Your (H) company’s information, translated and processed by us, has already been entered into the English CECDB’93 CD-ROM database. It is published jointly by the world’s biggest information publishing group Reed-Elsevier and the Sino-Asia Group specialising in Asian affairs. It is also distributed world-wide, and it has also been networked to services in the United States through AsiaInfor Inc. which has been jointly established by the BDI Group and our institute.

Now the renewal of the Chinese and English CECDB’94 has already begun. (Please) all the companies who receive this circular letter go through renewal procedures according to the following requirements:

- 1 Pay special attention to new means of communication when adding to and revising the Chinese and English database. Please (your H company) appoint people to contact us about this, and fill in the column for ‘database contact person’.
- 2 Please try to make the English translation consistent with the Chinese version when filling in the forms. If you have difficulty with the English translation, please send us the revised Chinese data. We will do the translation for you.
- 3 The data-entrance fee is 500 Yuan. Those enterprises who have already paid the fee and been entered into our database are exempt from the annual data renewal fee. Apply to defer payment if (you) have any difficulty with funding.
- 4 The renewal forms must (please) be sent to our institute before December 30, so that the data your (H) company provides can be entered in time into the various new editions of CECDB’94.
- 5 (We) hope that all companies who receive this circular will seriously add to and renew their data (with fees paid or unpaid), so that your (H) enterprises can provide the latest information to customers all over the world, and the vast numbers of customers can do various kinds of business with you (H) accurately.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Address: XXX; Telephone No. XXX.

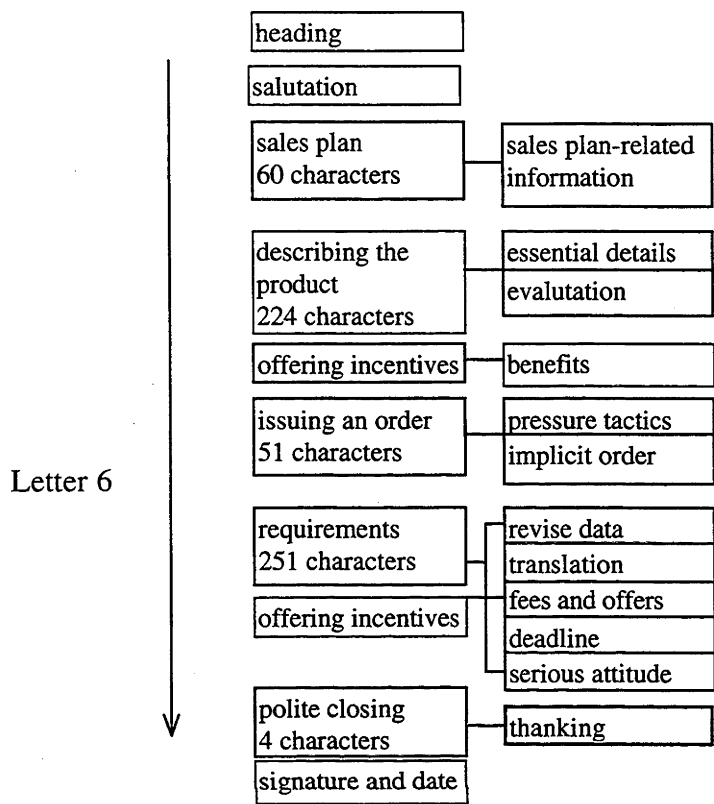
48
49
50

Bank account No. XXX

XXX Science Information Research Institute
October 1993.

This letter is written by a superior from a national research institute to subordinate companies. The structure of the letter can be schematised as in the following figure.

Figure 16. The structural moves of Letter 6



Altogether the letter has 590 characters

The above figure indicates the various moves and steps that appear in the letter. This letter has five typical content moves: (1) introducing the sales decision or plan, (2) describing the product, (3) offering incentives (4) issuing an implicit order, and (5) indicating requirements. Notice that ‘offering incentives’ is a split move and appears in two different places in the text. The second step of this move is embedded within Move 5. The major purpose of the letter is to issue an implicit order to the reader to participate in the database, and persuade the reader to accept the order. These communicative purposes are mainly realised in the above five moves in a well organised structure. This point is also discussed by the managers as shown in their typical comments on this letter below:

- (1) “Unlike some other ‘tongzhi’ which include a lot of background information, this letter follows a direct style, and tells the reader about the product at the beginning. In addition, the writer also introduces the writer’s official status in the same sentence. This kind of beginning is an appropriate way to begin a sales ‘tongzhi.’”
- (2) “The writer seems to have the appropriate marketing knowledge and knows how to promote a product by giving positive appraisals of the CD-ROM database.”
- (3) “Although the writer has power and official status, s/he tries to present a detailed description of the product to convince the reader. That means that the writer does not rely on authority only to promote the product.”
- (4) “The language is polite and appropriate. In this way, the writer establishes a positive public image as a superior, and the reader would accept this ‘tongzhi’ willingly.”

The above comments, to a large extent, reflect the managers’ knowledge structures and general expectations about writing sales ‘tongzhi’. The first comment is about how to write the beginning, and where the writer should address the importance of the product or service. The second and third comments are about how to advertise the product or service, and indicate that the writer should not rely too much on official status to promote the product. These two comments also indicate the sorts of features which can be used as persuasive factors in sales ‘tongzhi’. The last comment is about the importance of polite use of language, which is related to achieving a positive public image.

8.1.1 Detailed analysis

In the analysis of this letter, moves, steps, and linguistic forms will be discussed in a top-down manner. First of all, the communicative purposes are realised in the following moves and steps:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Move 1 | Informing the reader about the sales decision (lines 8-12) |
| Move 2 | Describing the product or service (lines 12-21) |
| | Step 1 Providing essential details |
| | Step 2 Evaluating the product or service |
| Move 3 | Offering incentives (lines 21-26, lines 36-38) |

- Step 1 Indicating the benefits already gained
- Step 2 Offering a special price
- Move 4 Issuing a 'tongzhi' order (27-29)
 - Step 1 Using pressure tactics
 - Step 2 Making an implicit order
- Move 5 Indicating requirements to carry out the order (30-45)

The text has five moves. Move 1 and Move 5 have one step each. The other three are composed of two steps each. All these moves and steps will be discussed in terms of the linguistic forms used to encode them. How each level is related to communicative purposes will also be elaborated.

(1) Move 1, Informing the reader about the sales decision (lines 8-12), can be seen as composed one step. This move introduces decision-related information instead of a sales decision or plan as frequently found in the corpus, because it is not about a new decision or future plan, but about a decision that has already been put into practice. However it is decision-related, and the service is what the superiors have decided to provide. This move is realised in the following sentence:

zhōngguó qǐyè gōngsī jí cǎnpǐn shùjùkù (yǐngwén jiǎnchēng
 China enterprise company and product database (English abbreviation
 CECDB) shì zài guójiā kēwěi zhǔchí xià, yóu zhōngguó kēxué
 CECDB) be in nation science-committee manage under by China science
 jìshù xīnxī yānjiūsuǒ (guójiā kēwěi xīnxī zhōngxīn)
 technology information institute (nation science-committee information center)
 liánhé guónèiwài xīnxī fāxíng jīgòu zhǔjiàn
 jion country-inside-outside information distribute organisation main-establish
 de.
 GNE

The Chinese Enterprises, Corporations, and Products Database (CECDB) has been,
 under the auspices of the National Science Committee, established jointly with

information distribution organisations both inside and outside the country, by the Research Institute of Chinese Science and Technology Information (the Information Centre of the National Science Committee) (lines 8-12).

This sentence is written in a ‘shǐ + de (be + ‘de’ particle)’ structure which is often used to stress a certain point of a sentence placed after ‘shǐ’ (Cheung et al., 1994:433) as noted in Chapter 4. In the above example, the auspices of the superior organisation National Science Committee is stressed, and introduced by the prepositional phrase ‘zài guójiā kēwěi de zhīchí xià’ (under the auspices of the National Science Committee). Here the full name of an even higher level official is used to indicate the power and support the writer has and also publicises the additional official status this letter has. At the end of the sentence, the writer’s organisation is given in its full name to indicate the official level of the writer as well.

In addition, the name of the product is placed at the beginning, also giving it a prominent place. This indicates that in addition to the superior’s authority, the writer is trying to draw the reader’s attention to the product. The approach of introducing the product first is quite similar to the sales letters discussed in Chapter 4.

(2) Move 2, Describing the product or service (lines 12-21), is composed of the following two steps:

Step 1 Providing essential details (lines 12-16)

Step 2 Evaluating the product or service (lines 15-21)

The first step is realised in two sentences in the first paragraph, the first sentence (lines 12-13) introduces the database and the various means by which it distributes information, including networks and CD Roms. The second sentence introduces the service this database provides. Take this sentence as an example:

CECDB, yǐ zhǔnquè de jiǎnsuǒ fānshǐ, xùnsù de chuánshū gōngnéng,
CECDB, with correct GNE index means quick GNE distribute function
wèi rùkù qǐyè yuányuán bùduàn de chuánsòng zhe
for enter-database enterprise continuous no-stop GNE deliver ASP

xìnxī. wèi quánshìjiè yònghù tígōng jiǎnsuǒ fúwù.

information for world-wide customer provide index service

CECDB constantly provides information for those who are entered in this database, and provides an indexing service for customers all over the world, with a precise indexing system and speedy information distribution (lines 14-16).

The above sentence has two parallel structures both indicated by the preposition ‘wèi’ (for) to introduce two different groups of customers: those who have already entered the database, and other customers from all over the world. The details of the service are introduced with the verb phrases ‘chuánsòng zhe xìnxī’ (deliver information) and ‘tígōng jiǎnsuǒ fúwù’ (provide an indexing service). In the first phrase, the present continuous aspect marker ‘zhe’ indicates the service is now being provided. Part of Step two, evaluating the product, is also embedded in this sentence. The underlined sections are the writer’s positive evaluations. ‘Zhǔnquè’ (precise), ‘xùnsù’ (speedy) and ‘yuányuán bùduàn’ (constant) are the three adjectives the writer uses to evaluate the quality of the service.

More positive evaluations are expressed in the next sentence:

zuòwéi yǒuxiào de guǎnggào shǒuduàn hé kěkào de shāngqíng

as effective GNE advertisement means and reliable GNE business-situation

láiyuán, CECDB yǒulì de cùjīn le guónèiwài chǎnpǐn

source CECDB forceful GNE promote ASP country-inside-outside product

màoyì hé gèzhǒng hézuò.

trade and various cooperation

As a means of effective advertising and reliable business information, CECDB has forcefully promoted business for both national and foreign products, and various kinds of cooperation (lines 16-18).

In the above, the adjectives ‘yǒuxiào’ (effective), ‘kěkào’ (reliable) and ‘yǒulì’ (forceful) are used to evaluate the contribution the database has made in national and international trade.

All the modifiers modifying nouns in Step 2 use ‘de’ (的) as a noun modifier signal, and the modifiers modifying verbs use another ‘de’ (地) as the verb modifier signal. As can be seen, the writer mainly resorts to adjective modifiers to give positive appraisals in these sentences.

In addition, the writer lists two prizes the product has won (lines 19-21) to support the positive evaluation. This can serve as a persuasive factor helping to convince the reader, as suggested by manager’s comment No. 3.

(3) Move 3, offering incentives (lines 21-26, and lines 36-38), is a split move because it is placed at two separate places of the text. This move is realised in the following two steps:

Step 1 Indicating the benefits already gained (lines 21-26)

Step 2 Making a special offer (lines 36-38)

The first step is realised in the following sentence:

guǐ dānwèi de xīnxī jīng wǒmen fānyì jiāgōng yǐ jìnrù
your (H) company GNE information though we translate process already enter
CECDB’s yīngwén bǎn CD ROM guāngpán, bǐng yóu shìjiè shàng zuǐ dà
CECDB’s English edition CD Rom disk and by world on most big
de xīnxī chūbǎn jítuán Reed-Elsevier hé zhūānmén cóngshì
GNE information publish group Reed-Elsevier and specialise engage
zhōngguó yàzhōu shìwù de Sino-Asia Group liánhé chūbǎn bǐng zài
China Asia affair GNE Sino-Asia Group joint publish and in
quángshìjiè fānwéi nèi gōngkāi fāxíng, bǐng tōngguò wǒsuǒ hé
world-wide scope inside public circulate and through I-institute with
měiguó BDI jítuán zǔjiàn de AsiaInfor Inc. zài měiguó liánwǎng fúwù.
America BDI group organise GNE AsiaInfor Inc. in America network serve

Your (H) company's information, translated and processed by us, has already been entered into the English CECDB'93 CD-ROM database. It is published jointly by the world's biggest information publishing group Reed-Elsevier and the Sino-Asia Group specialising in Asian affairs. It is also distributed world-wide, and it has also been networked to services in the United States through AsiaInfor Inc. which has been jointly established by the BDI Group and our institute (line 21-26).

The above sentence is linked by the connective 'bǐng' (and) used twice. The writer uses this connective to list the two benefits the reader has already gained from entering the database. They are 'gōngkāi fāxíng' (distributed publicly), and 'liánwǎng fúwù' (networked to services). These may be very convincing factors because they refer to how the reader has already benefited from the database. We may notice that the writer also uses the 'pingxing' honorific form 'guǐ' to address the reader. 'Guǐ' is often used to address the reader in the 'pingxing' sales genres as noted in the last two chapters. This form would not be appropriate in very formal 'tongzhi', but it is used by this sales 'tongzhi', as well as some other letters in the corpus. The use of this form helps to achieve a polite and modest public image. Its use also reflects the shift in sales 'tongzhi'. This phenomenon is similar to other examples of genre borrowing in which the writer uses forms from another genre to indicate politeness, as with the inclusion of 'shangxing' forms in 'pingxing' texts.

In the above sentence, the writer also tries to convince the reader by referring to the reputation of the relevant information groups. The joint effort to publish the reader's information is made by two well-known groups: one is the 'biggest' in the world, the other is a specialist in 'Asian affairs'. The writer emphasises the reliability of each group by using various strategies. For Reed-Elsevier Group, the superlative degree 'zuǐdàde' (world's biggest) is used to indicate its scale. For the Sino-Asia Group, 'zhūānmén' (specialise) is used to show expertise.

The second step, making a special offer, is embedded in the last move, and is mainly expressed in the following sentence:

yǐ jiāofèi rùkù qǐyè gè niándù miǎnfèi gēngxīn shùjù.
 already pay-fee enter-database enterprise each year exempt-fee revise data
 Those enterprises who have already paid the fee and been entered into our database
 are exempt from the annual data renewal fee (lines 36-37).

The special offer is indicated in the phrase ‘miǎnfèi’ (to be exempt from payment). The writer here resorts to a special offer as an incentive. This kind of incentive is also sometimes used in sales letters, as discussed in Chapter 4, and its use here indicates an influence from sales letters.

Other letters in the corpus usually use one of the above two steps, either explaining the benefits or making a special offer to encode this move, but this letter employs both of them. This may indicate that this letter is very much influenced by the style of sales letter writing.

(4) Move 4, issuing a ‘tongzhi’ order (lines 27-29), is composed of the following two steps:

Step 1 Using pressure tactics (line 27)

Step 2 Making an implicit order (lines 28-29)

These two steps are closely linked and are, in fact, expressed in one compound sentence as shown below:

xiànzài, CECDB niánzhōng yīngwén bǎn de gēngxīn zhēnggǎo
 now CECDB mid-year English edition GNE revision solicit-contribution
 yǐjīng kāishǐ, qǐng jiēdào cǐ tōngzhī de dānwèi àn rúxià
 already begin please receive this circular GNE company according below
 yāoqiú bànlǐ rùkù gēngxīn shǒuxù.
 requirement go-through enter-database revise procedure
 Now the renewal of the Chinese and English CECDB’94 has already begun. (Please)
 all the companies who receive this circular letter go through renewal procedures
 according to the following requirements (line 27-29):

The first clause is related to pressure tactics expressed by the verbal phrase ‘yǐjīng kāishǐ’ (has already begun). This phrase indicates that the revision is urgent, and is also consistent with the heading of the ‘urgent tongzhi’. This urgency is mentioned again here in order to prepare the reader for the implicit order that is to follow. The second clause is related to making an implicit order, and is written as an imperative sentence introduced by ‘qǐng’ (please). As noted in Section 5.2.4 of this chapter, ‘Qǐng’ is frequently used to introduce an implicit order. In this imperative sentence, the subject ‘jiēdào cǐ tōngzhī de dānwèi’ (all the companies who have received this ‘tongzhi’) is mentioned to refer to all the subordinates concerned. This is a ‘xiaxing’ generic feature as discussed also in Section 5.2.4.

(5) Move 5, indicating requirements (lines 30-45), is written as five numbered items. Nevertheless, all of these items can be considered as one step, because they are specific procedures for entering the database. They are: appointing a contact person, filling out the forms in both Chinese and English, paying the correct fees, setting a deadline, and revising the data seriously. This move is basically informational; however, it also reflects the use of typical ‘xiaxing tongzhi’ language. Take the following sentence, the fourth item, as an example:

gōngzuòdān wù qǐng zài 12 yuè 30 rì qián jǐzhǐ wǒshuǒ, yǐbiàn
 work-form must please on December 30 date before send-to I-institute so-that
 guǐ dānwèi tígòng de shùjù jǐshí jìnrù 94 nián fāxíng de CECDB’94
 your (H) company offer GNE data timely enter 94 year publish GNE CECDB’94
 gèlèi xīnbǎn.

various new-edition

The renewal forms must (please) be sent to our institute before December 30, so that the data your (H) company provides can be entered in time into the various new editions of CECDB’94 (lines 39-41).

In the above example, the requirement is expressed by the verb phrase ‘wù qǐng’ (must please), which is used to indicate a polite requirement as noted in 5.2.5 of this chapter. This

requirement is followed by a clause introduced by the connective ‘yǐbiàn’ (so that). The ‘yǐbiàn’ clause is placed after the main clause. Here ‘yǐbiàn’ indicates a promise the writer makes to the reader. This pattern of requirement + promise is another feature which relates to the language of official status and which indicates the power that a superior has. The meaning is: “if you do what is required, I promise that you will benefit”. The reader is once again referred to by the honorific ‘guǐ’ (your H) indicating politeness. Notice that the writer wants to show his/her official status by making a promise to the reader, and also uses ‘pingxing’ honorific forms to indicate politeness. This kind of combination has already been seen as typical of the genre change of sales ‘tongzhi’.

To sum up: this letter is, first of all, well organised and the communicative purposes are expressed clearly in the structure. Secondly, as discussed by the managers, this letter is a good example of combining the language of ‘tongzhi’ and sales. The writer publicises the official status which justifies why a ‘tongzhi’ is used to promote sales. At the same time, s/he also tries to promote the product in a persuasive manner. Above all, the focus of the letter is on introducing the product and persuading the reader, instead of relying on a display of official power. In addition, this letter reflects the genre shift occurring in sales ‘tongzhi’, and so the product is placed in a more prominent position than the official status, and the writer uses the ‘pingxing’ honorific forms to address the reader. All this makes the letter stand out as the best in the corpus.

8.2 The analysis of the least successful letter

The next section will analyse the least successful letter, Letter 12.

Tongzhi about Soliciting Advertisements from Member Companies

Every member company,

The 1994 autumn "China Exports Exhibition" is to be held on October 15 in Guangzhou. This is an important exhibition to show the achievements of our economic reform and opening-up, and Chinese-style socialist construction. This exhibition will have the following innovation: "Delegations will be organised by provinces and cities. Exhibition halls will be organised by business associations. Delegations will integrate with the business associations, and enterprises will arrange their own exhibitions."

In order to support the innovation of this autumn exhibition, to expand the influence of Chinese enterprises and products both inside and outside the country, and to promote cooperation between Chinese enterprises and businesses all over the world, the International Advertising Exhibition Co. of Chinese Metal and Mining Industry will edit and publish a special English issue of Chinese Metal and Mining Products, Vol. 16.

The special issue of Chinese Metal and Mining Products is a professional trade periodical about exports and imports of metal and mining products. (It) has a fairly large scale and influence. (It is) printed on A4 paper, with two issues annually, and 10,000 copies each issue. The range of distribution includes: major metal and mining product importing and exporting companies all over the world, the commercial offices of Chinese embassies in various foreign countries, the major overseas Chinese metal and mining product companies, and trade delegations, clients and foreign trade companies both inside and outside the country who will attend the Guangzhou exhibition. Since its publication, this periodical has contributed greatly to promoting sales and expanding exports. (It) has achieved comparatively good results, and gained wide attention from business people in various countries. It has become an important reference for understanding the Chinese metal and mining product business.

In order to strengthen the overall advertising effect of the metal and mining industry at the autumn exhibition, and to promote and expand export trade, we hope that you will have your enterprise's achievements and product advertisements published in this periodical, and exhibit the achievements of (your) company and advertise (your) products; so that business people of the metal and mining product industry will understand the strength of your company and your sincerity in cooperating with foreign countries.

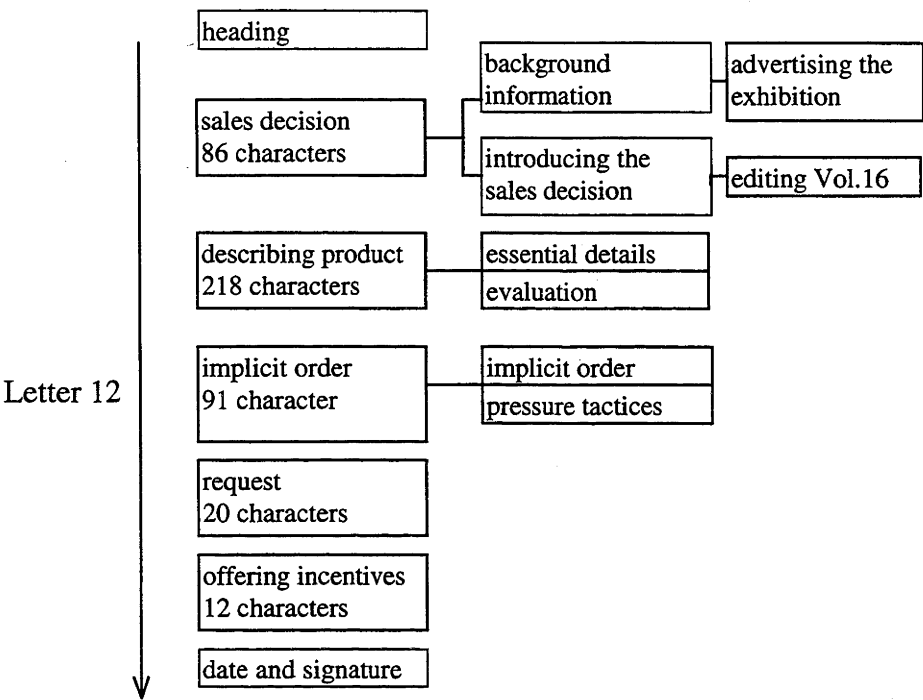
Anyone interested please contact directly the International Advertising Exhibition Co. of Chinese Metal and Mining Industry. A special rate will be offered to our members.

Contact person XXX; Telephone No. XXX; Fax No. XXX.

XXX Office of Import and Export Association
of Chinese Metal and Mining Industry
July 19, 1994

This letter, written by the Metals and Mining Industry Association, is directed to its member companies. The structure of the letter can be schematised in the following figure.

Figure 17. An illustration of the structure of Letter 12



Altogether the letter has 459 characters

The above figure shows the various moves and steps that appear in the letter. This letter has five moves: informing the reader about the sales decision, describing the product, issuing an implicit order, making a request, and offering incentives. There are two problems here: why should the writer advertise the exhibition, and why should the letter have both an implicit order and a request? It is the only letter in the corpus that has a request. The major purpose of this letter is to order the readers who are member companies to have their companies advertised in the periodical. It seems that not all of the moves are relevant to this communicative purpose, such as the request and introduction to the exports exhibition. These problems have also been discussed by the managers as shown in their typical comments on this letter below.

- (1) “This letter is badly organised, and does not focus on the major purpose. The writer seems to have two focuses: to introduce both the ‘China Exports Exhibition’ and the periodical. This is not an effective way of writing a sales ‘tongzhi’. In fact, the introduction about the exhibition all through the letter is only distracting the reader from the major purpose of advertising the periodical.”
- (2) “The beginning of the letter is a digression. The heading is about a periodical, but the first paragraph is devoted to the introduction of an exhibition. In addition, the register the writer uses to introduce the show is very similar to that of a sales invitation, which would create confusion for the reader. If the writer intends to have the exhibition as background information, the letter could very well start with Paragraph 2.”
- (3) “Ending by requesting the reader is repetitive. Since the writer has already given an order, why should s/he expresses the same idea again? In addition, this ending does not have the right language form. ‘Yǒuyǐzhě’ (anyone interested) is not an appropriate form for soliciting a response in sales ‘tongzhi’, and is often used in advertisements.”

The above managers’ views, to a certain extent, reflect their world and formal schemata for writing sales ‘tongzhi’, and explain why this letter was rated the least successful. The first comment is about the lack of focus in the letter. The second relates to the appropriate way to begin a sales ‘tongzhi’. The third is about the ending of the letter, which is considered to be repetitive and in the wrong register. From the native speakers’ comments, it can be seen that the letter was mainly thought to have digressions and create confusion in understanding the communicative purposes.

8.2.1 Detailed analysis

In the analysis, moves, steps and linguistic forms will be examined. First of all, the moves and steps are described below:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Move 1 | Informing the reader about the sales decision or plan (lines 6-18) |
| | Step 1 Providing background information |
| | Step 2 Introducing the sales decision or plan |
| Move 2 | Describing the product (lines 19-31) |
| | Step 1 Providing essential details of the product |

	Step 2 Evaluating the product
Move 3	Issuing a ‘tongzhi’ order (lines 32-38)
	Step 1 Making an implicit order
	Step 2 Using pressure tactics
Move 4	Making a request (lines 39-40)
Move 5	Offering incentives (lines 40-41)

As shown above, the first three moves are composed of two steps, while the last two has one step each only. A detailed account of this top-down relationship between moves, steps and a further lower level of linguistic forms will be elaborated below.

(1) Move 1, informing the reader about the sales decision (lines 6-18), is composed of the following two steps:

Step 1 Providing background information (lines 6-12)

Step 2 Introducing the sales decision or plan (lines 13-18)

Step 1 introduces the China Exports Exhibition, which is supposed to be the background information for the sales decision, but it focuses on advertising the exhibition as indicated by managers’ comment No. 2. The exhibition is introduced in the following forms:

yǐjiǔjiǔsì qiūjǐ “zhōngguó chūkǒu jiāoyìhuì” jiān yú shíyuè shíwǔ rì zài
1994 autumn “China export exhibition” will in October 15 date in
Guangzhou jǔxíng.

Guangzhou hold

The 1994 autumn “China Exports Exhibition” is to be held on October 15 in
Guangzhou (lines 6-7).

Forms such as ‘jiān yú ... jǔxíng’ (will be held in ...) are often used to introduce an exhibition in a sales invitation as discussed in Chapter 5. These forms do not appear to be relevant as background information for a sales ‘tongzhi’. Therefore the above sentence only indicates a digression in content. The sales invitation elements can be further seen in the content of the following sentence, in which the writer evaluates the exhibition as ‘important’

(line 7). Therefore not only an inappropriate register but also the wrong content has been included in this step. All this can be misleading for the reader to understand the communicative purposes. As the managers observed, the beginning of the letter is a digression.

Step 2, introducing the sales decision or plan, begins to establish the exhibition as a background objective:

wèi pèihé qiūjiāo huǐ gǎigé kuòdà zhōngguó qǐyè hé
in-order-to support autumn exhibition reform enlarge China enterprise and
shāngyè zài guónèiwài de yǐngxiǎng, cùjìn zhōngguó qǐyè
trade in country-inside-outside GNE influence promote China enterprise
yú shìjiè jīngmào de jiāowǎng yú hèzhuò, zhōngguó
and world economics trade GNE exchange and cooperation China
wǔkuàng guójī guǎnggào gōngsī jiāng biānjí chūbǎn
five-metal-mine international advertisement company will edit publish
zhōngguó wǔjīn kuàngchǎn yīngwén zhuānkān dī shíliù qī.
China five-metal mine-product English periodical number sixteen volumn
In order to support the innovation of this autumn exhibition, to expand the influence
of Chinese enterprises and products both inside and outside the country, and to
promote cooperation between Chinese enterprises and businesses all over the world,
the International Advertising Exhibition Co. of Chinese Metal and Mining Industry
will edit and publish a special English issue of Chinese Metal and Mining Products,
Vol. 16 (lines 13-18).

The above sentence begins with the connective ‘wèile’ (in order to), which introduces the background objective. This term also establishes the link between the exhibition and the periodical. The decision is introduced by the future tense marker ‘jiāng’ (will), to show what the writer is going to do. This form is often found in the corpus to introduce a sales decision. However, the problem is why the writer should advertise the exhibition so much in the first step. This makes it hard to understand what the writer intends to do. This appears to

be one reason why the managers suggest that the letter could very well begin with the second paragraph, which is also the second step.

(2) Move 2, describing the product (lines 19-31), is composed of the following two steps:

Step 1 Providing essential details of the product (lines 19-28)

Step 2 Evaluating the product (lines 20-21; lines 28-31)

In the above two steps, Step 2 is basically placed after Step 1. However, it is also embedded in part in Step 1, as Lines 20-21 overlap with Step 1. The first step, providing essential details, includes introducing the scale and influence of the periodical, and this is supported by statistical evidence (10,000 copies). The second step gives positive evaluations of various aspects of the periodical. Take the following sentence, which involves part of both steps, as an example:

zhōngguó wǔjīn kuàngchǎn shì jùyǒu yǐjīng guīmó hé yǐngxiǎng
China five-metal mine-product be have fairly-great scale and influence
de wǔjīn kuàngchǎnpǐng jīnchūkuǒ màoyì zhuānyè xīng zázhi.
GNE five-metal mine-product import-export trade profession nature journal
The special issue of Chinese Metal and Mining Products is a professional trade
periodical about exports and imports of metal and mining products. (It) has a fairly
large scale and influence (lines 19-21).

The above example is, first of all, about the introduction of the journal as ‘zhuānyè xīng zázhi’ (a professional trade periodical). Part of the second step can be seen embedded in the verbal phrase + de (GNE) ‘jùyǒu yǐjīng guīmó hé yǐngxiǎng de’ (has a fairly large scale and influence) which is used as a modifier of the noun, ‘zázhi’ (periodical). On the whole, the forms used to indicate the two steps seem to be appropriate because they help achieve the purpose of giving positive appraisals.

(3) Move 3, Issuing a ‘tongzhi’ order (lines 32-38)

Step 1 Making an implicit order (lines 32-36)

Step 2 Using pressure tactics (lines 36-38)

Both of the above steps are found in the following sentence:

wèile jiāqiáng qiūjiāohuì de zhěngtǐ xuānchuán xiàoguǒ,
in-order-to strengthen autumn-exhibition GNE entire advertising effect
cùjìn kuòdà chéngjiāo, wǒmen xīwàng nǐmen zài gāikān shàng
promote enlarge make-deal we hope you (pl.) in this-periodical on
kāndēng gǎiyè xíngxiàng huò shāngpǐn guǎnggào, zhǎnshì gōngsī
publish enterprise image or commodity advertisement show company
de yèjī, xuānchuán gōngsī de shāngpǐn, ràng shìjiè wǔjīn
GNE achievement advertise company GNE commodity let world five-metal
kuàngchǎn mào yǐjiè rénshì liáo jiě nǐ gōngsī de shí lì hé kāizhǎn
mine-product trade-circle people know you company GNE strength and develop
duìwài jiāowǎng de chéngyǐ.
foreign cooperation GNE sincerity

In order to strengthen the overall advertising effect of the metal and mining industry at the autumn exhibition, and to promote and expand export trade, we hope that you will have your enterprise's achievements and product advertisements published in this periodical, and exhibit the achievements of (your) company and advertise (your) products; so that business people of the metal and mining product industry will understand the strength of your company and your sincerity in cooperating with foreign countries. (lines 32-38).

The first step, making an implicit order, is introduced by the connective 'wèile' (in order to), which is often used to introduce a background objective. The use of this term, therefore, immediately reminds the reader of the introduction of the sales decision or plan in the second paragraph of the letter. Why should the same structure be used here again? First of all, it is a repetition in structure. We can also find the relevant background objective relating to the

metal and mining industry is mentioned. This is only introduced now, towards the end of the letter, and this is not a common practice in sales ‘tongzhi’.

The order is expressed using the polite form ‘xīwàng’ (hope). Here the subject ‘wǒmen’, which is often omitted, is mentioned for emphasis. The writer tries to stress the status of ‘wǒmen’ as a superior and link ‘wǒmen’ to the ‘metal and mining industry’ as mentioned in the ‘wèile’ clause. The order is related to the specific task of asking the reader to advertise their products in the periodical.

The second step, using pressure tactics is expressed as a promise, which is introduced by the verb ‘ràng’ (let). The meaning of this clause is: if you follow the implicit order, we will let you benefit. This ‘ràng’ clause shows the range of power the superior can exert over the reader. As noted earlier, making a promise is also a common ‘xiaxing’ practice.

(4) Move 4, making a request (lines 39-40), is expressed as follows:

yǒuyǐzhě jǐng qǐng yǔ zhōngguó wǔkuàng guójī
interested-person direct please with China five-metal international
guǎnggào zhǎnlǎn gōngsī lánxǐ.

Advertising exhibition company contact

Anyone interested please contact directly the International Advertising Exhibition
Co. of Chinese Metal and Mining Industry. (lines 39-40).

The above request seems to take the place of indicating requirements in the letters, and suggests an inappropriate speech act. This request is raised in a conditional manner in terms of its meaning, although no conditional clause is included. It is introduced by ‘yǒuyǐzhě’ (anyone interested) which directs the request only to those who are interested, and is often used in advertisements. However, it may not be the appropriate form for a sales ‘tongzhi’ which issues an implicit order. In addition, as noted in the managers’ comment No. 3, this request can also be understood as a repetition, because the implicit order has already been given.

(5) Move 5, offering incentives (lines 40-41), is mainly encoded by the phrase ‘shíxíng yōuhuì’ (offering a special rate). These forms seem to be appropriate, as they are also found as an incentive in other sales genres. However, it was not common to find this move at the end of letters in the corpus. Instead, it is usually found in the middle of the letter.

To sum up, this letter is rated the least successful, mainly because it is not clearly structured. Although the introduction of the products and the implicit order are written in the appropriate ways, the major communicative purposes are not clearly expressed because of the poor structure. This shows that a well organised structure is very important for expressing communicative purposes. In its structure, the letter also has some repetitions, especially making a request which repeats the implicit order. In addition, the sales elements are not well coordinated. This brings about the issue of which sales elements are acceptable in current sales ‘tongzhi’.

9 Conclusion

This chapter provides an analysis of a ‘xiaxing’ sales genre, sales ‘tongzhi’, using the combined approach proposed in Chapter 2. In the analysis, communicative purposes are used as an important starting point to study this genre. All the lower levels of the text structure can be related to the realisation of the communicative purposes. However, the most important observation is that sales ‘tongzhi’ are in a state of change which reflects the development in economic structure in China. First of all, this change is reflected in the communicative purposes. For example, ‘achieving the writer’s official status’ is giving way to ‘persuading the reader about the good value of the product’. This change in the communicative purposes is also reflected at lower levels of the text, although the genre still retains many important features of ‘tongzhi’. All the major points discussed in this chapter can be summarised as follows.

Firstly, this chapter illustrates that the initial step for studying this genre is to identify the communicative purposes, and especially their changes, using well-defined world schemata. The relevant world schemata include knowledge about official status, the understanding of cultural protocols, and marketing knowledge. Since the economic structure

is changing, the relationship between a superior and a subordinate is also changing. As a result, sales 'tongzhi' have to coordinate issuing the 'tongzhi' order to buy the product with persuading the reader with reliable evidence of the worth of the product. A lot of effort needs to be made to persuade the reader about the good quality of the product. This effort indicates a very important change in communicative purpose of sales 'tongzhi'.

Secondly, this chapter illustrates that the hierarchical levels of moves, steps and linguistic forms are closely related to the realisation of communicative purposes. There are two kinds of moves: the formulaic and the content moves. Formulaic moves are mainly used to indicate the writer's official status, to declare the 'tongzhi' genre, and to achieve a positive public image. For example, headings are used to state the writer's official status and indicate the 'xiaxing tongzhi' sales genre. The content moves tend to strive to achieve a number of related purposes, among which persuading the reader to buy the product is found to be the most important. Therefore, the move of describing the product or service becomes the focus of the letter and this is where major persuasion is contained. The purpose of establishing the writer's superior power and authority can be considered to be quite important, because this demonstrates that the writer is entitled to give orders. How linguistic forms contribute to the realisation of communicative purposes is also demonstrated. For example, solemn forms are used to achieve the writer's superior status, while polite forms are used to establish a positive image.

The dynamic but systematic changes within this genre were found to be reflected at all levels, as discussed in Section 7 of this chapter. First of all, the communicative purposes are changing and this has caused the lower levels of the text to change as well. For example, most letters tend to use one heading instead of two, to reduce the formality of this genre, and polite closings are used to a certain extent to achieve a polite image. Sales strategies have begun to be incorporated into this genre, such as offering incentives and evaluating the product. The linguistic forms, too, also indicate some changes. For example, the 'pingxing' honorific form 'guǐ' (you H) is used to address the reader. This form would not have been used in a 'xiaxing' genre before the economic reform. This indicates a change in the relationship between the writer and the reader. These changes are systematic, and the letters seem to have absorbed some 'pingxing' forms, while 'xiaxing' forms such as 'géxià' (your Excellency) do not seem to be appropriate.

Thirdly, the results of questionnaires and interviews about formulaic moves administered among enterprise managers and business writing students were discussed. It was found that their understanding of communicative purposes can influence their preferences at lower levels of the text. The results show that the managers have a more effective understanding of the communicative purposes, especially the way they are changing, and they are able to relate their preferences clearly to these purposes. Their different views on the use of polite closings and some linguistic forms suggest that a divergence in the understanding of communicative purposes can influence lower-level choices.

The different views between the managers and students also demonstrates the existence of the gap between the textbook prescriptions and the business writing practice as found in the last two chapters. Textbooks have not shown the genre changes that are happening in sales ‘tongzhi’.

Fourthly, the analysis of the most and least successful letters identified by the managers may indicate the general expectations about writing sales ‘tongzhi’ in the business discourse community. The most successful letter is a good example of using both world and formal schemata in constructing a letter. The letter is well-organised to express clearly the communicative purposes. The letter also indicates a good combination of both official status and sales elements. Also, this letter expresses elements in appropriate ways such as the way the product is introduced and the use of honorific forms. On the other hand, the least successful letter provides an awkward example of writing a sales ‘tongzhi’. The major weakness is that it is not well-structured, and the communicative purposes are not clear. In addition, some of the forms are used inappropriately. Thus the discussion of these two letters also indicates that changes in the lower levels reflect the changes in communicative purposes. Therefore, the writer has to have the appropriate knowledge structures which reflect these changes.

To sum up, all the genre shifts indicated in sales ‘tongzhi’ can be seen as evidence to show that genre is dynamic as noted in Chapter 2. In particular, in the current transitional period, it is likely that changes will occur in genres such as sales ‘tongzhi’, and that these changes will be systematic. In addition, the changes discussed so far are only limited to sales ‘tongzhi’; other types of ‘tongzhi’ may not show exactly the same kinds of change. How

much sales 'tongzhi' will change or whether they will be replaced by sales letters will mainly depend on the evolving social and economic structure of China.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

This study set out to propose a synthetic approach to genre analysis and to illustrate the approach through a consideration of Modern Chinese sales genres. To accomplish this task, a number of approaches used in discourse analysis have been explored and a combined approach has been proposed. A key feature of this approach is to associate schema theory (Bartlett, 1932; Adams and Collins, 1979; Rumelhart, 1980) and genre analysis (especially Swales, 1990), although reference has also been made to marketing theory, Chinese rhetoric and composition writing.

The analysis in this study is basically data-based. Data are drawn from authentic sales texts used in Chinese business communication. Another source of data is drawn from questionnaires and interviews among enterprise managers and business writing students. The views of the native speakers are analysed in relation to the findings of the corpus.

It has been argued that this combined approach is powerful because it can throw light not only on the relation between communicative purposes and text, but also on the relationship between social context, communicative purposes and the use of genres. Firstly, with this approach, communicative purposes can be used as a starting point. For example, the understanding of these purposes can offer some clues to questions such as why business writing students and enterprise managers have different opinions about how to write a certain genre. It has been argued that it is essential to study communicative purposes first in genre analysis. It has also been argued that both world and formal schemata should be applied in the analysis in order to guarantee a full understanding of these purposes. In particular, world schemata should be considered, because this is the point which links social context, genres and communicative purposes.

Secondly, with this approach, genre can be studied from a dynamic point of view because the use of genres and the communicative purposes of genres are associated with changes in the social context. In fact, the use of sales genres in mainland China since 1949 exemplifies this. With the development of society, some old forms disappear or change, while new genres emerge and begin to be widely used to meet the communicative needs that arise in the changing social context. As the focus of this study, sales letters, sales invitations, and sales 'tongzhi' have been examined in relation to genre development. In China, the use

of sales letters and sales invitations represents the emergence of new genres, and the use of sales ‘tongzhi’ represents genre change.

In addition, we have exemplified the combined approach proposed in this thesis by analysing these sales genres. It is found that this throws new light on the three genres, as the approach gives strength to the analysis of each level and the relationship between the various levels. All of these levels are related in one way or another to the realisation of communicative purposes. With this approach, one can also study cultural norms such as borrowing elements from other genres as a means of achieving a polite image.

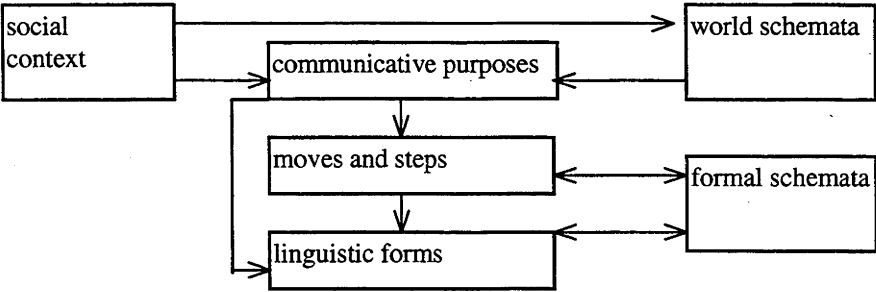
This concluding chapter will first discuss the model of genre analysis proposed by this study and explicate the value of this model in the study of both genre and genre development. A major finding is that the combined approach gives a convincing description of why a given genre is constituted the way it is. As a typical example, the borrowing of generic items will be discussed. Finally we suggest that these findings have important implications and potential applications in a number of areas. These include genre analysis, comparative genre studies, business Chinese teaching and language teaching in general.

1 Overview of the model of genre analysis proposed in this study

First of all, this study has proposed a combined approach for the analysis of Chinese sales genres, which can also be used in analysing genre in general. This approach derives from the combined strengths of a number of approaches that have been used in both English and Chinese genre and rhetorical study.

The most important contribution of this model is that it provides clues to understanding the dynamic nature of genre. A genre is not treated as an isolated unit of analysis, but as a complex phenomenon linked to social context. This relationship can be shown in the following figure:

Figure 18. The proposed model of genre study



The above figure can, first of all, account for how genre develops. Genre and its communicative purposes are closely related to social context. A change in the social context will bring changes to genre through changes to communicative purposes. This is the link that accounts for the replacement of old genres, and emergence of new genres, as well as for the evolution of genres. Out of a changing social context different communicative needs may arise. These needs are important factors and conditions for bringing about a genre change. Consequently, a new genre may emerge or an existing genre may become out of date. The new genre will be associated with a certain set of communicative purposes governed by the social context. These purposes will then be realised in texts by relevant moves, steps and linguistic forms.

When there is a continuing need for an existing genre but some changes in communicative purposes are required by the social context, then this study predicts that the genre will evolve as a consequence. The degree of change in communicative purposes will lead to changes to a similar degree in the various lower levels of the text. A knowledge of the world and formal schemata will be required to understand this genre development. This model accounts for the emergence of new genres and the evolution of existing genres in Chinese business communication and it can also explain why some of the classical Chinese genres as noted in Chapter 1 have disappeared.

Secondly, the above figure shows how a genre can be studied. A genre is seen as having certain communicative purposes. Different genres have different communicative purposes, and it is communicative purposes that characterise a certain genre. Since the communicative purposes of genres are related to social context, these purposes should be studied by using well-defined world schemata. This world knowledge is closely related to

the social context and should reflect the relevant social and cultural key factors, so that a correct understanding of the purposes can be built up.

Genre can be studied in a top-down manner. A text representative of a certain genre basically should meet all of the main communicative purposes of the genre it belongs to. The communicative purposes are the main determinants of a genre, and they represent the highest level. These purposes are realised by the lower levels of moves, steps and linguistic forms in accordance with concepts introduced by Swales (1990). The advantage of using these units of analysis is that all the lower levels can be closely related to the communicative purposes. However, the relationships among them are rather complex, and there is, generally speaking, no one-to-one correspondence between them.

The top-down processing of genre does not necessarily develop from a higher level to the immediately lower level. For example, the purposes are also related to the moves and steps (Swales, 1990), as well as to linguistic forms. For example, at the level of moves, greetings in sales letters can be used to achieve a polite public image, while at the level of linguistic forms, honorific pronouns and verbs can also be used as politeness strategies to achieve this purpose.

While emphasising top-down processing, I am quite aware of the possibility of bottom-up processing. This can be especially true for people with less competency in using the genre. For example, business writing students are quite likely to learn linguistic forms first and then attempt to relate these forms to higher level structures and purposes. I am stressing top-down processing in this study, following Swales' (1990) approach to genre, as noted in Chapter 2. This process may also be related to the psychological process involved in writing a text, where ideas or purposes are developed first, then the relevant moves and steps, and finally linguistic forms.

The study of moves, steps and linguistic forms also requires well-defined formal schemata. In this way, the rhetorical structure of a text can be studied. One can consider how ideas can be clearly organised and linguistic forms can be effectively used. A typical example of effective use of formal schemata can be found in the most successful letters in each relevant chapter.

2 The dynamic nature of genre

This section will look at the dynamic nature of genre from a diachronic perspective. The combined approach proposed in this study can describe in a principled way how sales genres have developed in both the delinking and relinking periods of business communication.

For example, sales ‘qingshi’ (requests) and sales ‘pifu’ (official replies) were quite frequently used before the economic opening-up of China to organise the distribution of stock supplies. This mode of business communication basically reflected the planned economic structure which existed at that time. After the economic opening-up, new genres such as sales letters and sales invitations began to emerge to meet the needs of market economy as part of the economic structure. Sales ‘tongzhi’, however, have continued to exist, but in the context of the market economy they have been adapted to new circumstances. The dynamic factors indicated in sales letters, sales invitations and sales ‘tongzhi’ will be further discussed below.

The three sales genres selected for particular emphasis in this study indicate different aspects of genre dynamics. Sales letters indicate a completely new genre, which started to be used after the economic opening-up in 1978. Since the need to promote products in response to the market economy has arisen, companies need to write sales letters as a means of promotion. Sales letters in China are new in both genre type and communicative purposes. In genre type, they are called ‘tuxiaoxin’ (sales letters). Promoting products and establishing a positive public image indicate something new. Consequently, these two communicative purposes, as well as others, require appropriate lower levels. For example, the content of these letters is, generally speaking, related to advertising strategies.

The use of sales invitations indicates another type of genre emergence. Although this genre is also new, it is based on an existing form of ‘yaoqingxin’ (invitation letters). Thus it is a sales genre which grows out of an existing form not related to sales. The use of sales invitations is also related to the change of social context. Sales invitations represent a new genre because, first of all, they represent a new purpose, which is to invite the reader to come and buy products. This purpose, in conjunction with other relevant purposes, determines the lower levels of the text to realise inviting and sales strategies. It is found to

be an effective way to promote products as well as establishing contacts. Therefore sales invitations have become prevalent.

The modern use of sales 'tongzhi' involves a genre change. In fact, as noted in Chapters 1 and 6, this is the only sales genre used in both the delinking and relinking periods. In the first period, this genre was mainly used to give orders to carry out the sales plans and policies of the country. In the second period, the major purpose is to give an implicit order to the reader to buy a product. This change of communicative purpose consequently leads to changes in the lower levels of the text. For example, some of the moves used by sales letters are also used in sales 'tongzhi'. The linguistic forms used are also changing, such as the use of polite closings.

The dynamic nature of genre is also reflected in differences observed between managers and students. Although the questionnaire and interviews only focused on the formulaic moves in each genre, the findings reveal different understandings of genres. The enterprise managers are exposed to and keep in touch with changes in the economic structure. As such, they have well-defined and well-adapted world and formal schemata for understanding the communicative purposes of sales genres as they are practiced in China. They also know how to balance the relationships among these purposes. The students, however, do not seem to have developed the appropriate world schemata and mainly rely on textbook advice. This also shows that communicative purposes are a very reliable criterion for understanding or analysing a genre. Since the enterprise managers have a better understanding of the communicative purposes, they can also relate their lower level choices to these purposes in a more appropriate way than the students. However, this is not to say that the students are completely unaware of changes in the social context. In fact, they may have very radical views, such as those they expressed about writing sales 'tongzhi' in Chapter 6. However, they appear to be less aware of how these changes manifest themselves in the business world. Since students are not fully exposed to the changes of business context, such as the degrees of economic opening-up, they do not seem to comprehend these changes, and their attitudes failed to reflect them.

One may ask: what will happen to these sales genres? Will this language shift continue? However, it is still difficult to forecast what will happen in the use of sales genres in mainland China. There is one thing certain though, from the discussion in this thesis: the

use of sales genres will continuously reflect the level of change that takes place in the economic structure. For example, sales letters will be used if the market economy continues as part of the economic structure, and will be replaced by other forms if the market economy ceases to exist. Sales ‘tongzhi’ will continue to be used if the planned economy is still in practice, but will be replaced if the market economy turns out to be the sole economic structure.

3 Accounting for the similarities in the sales genres

All three sales genres share one purpose in common, and this is to promote sales. This means that these sales genres reflect, to various degrees, the influence of the market economy as part of the economic structure of mainland China. As such, all these genres can be related to the AIDA model of attention, interest, desire and attention, as noted in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. These are the basic strategies used to promote products. The communicative purposes of sales letters reflect this process most directly, while sales invitations and sales ‘tongzhi’ indicate ‘desire’ through their work to persuade the reader to buy the product.

The inclusion of AIDA as applicable to the communicative purposes of sales genres in China is another indication that genre develops in relation to the social context. The AIDA model has grown out of the marketing strategies used in capitalist countries, which are based on the use of high technology and mass production. Although China is by no means a capitalist country, the introduction of a market economy has brought increased use of high technology and mass production. This change in the social context has laid the foundation for the application of the AIDA model as a part of product promotion. Therefore the use of AIDA does not seem to be a coincidence, but occurs naturally in accordance with the elements of the market economy. It rather reflects the fact that Chinese sales genres also employ this effective process to promote products.

The AIDA model means that each of the three sales genres can be seen as a type of persuasive text, and all of them have persuading the reader as a major purpose. Although they may employ different strategies to persuade the reader, these strategies basically take the form of appeals to reason and emotion. For example, all three genres refer to convincing

factors about products, such as their quality, popularity or brand name. They also employ the strategy of offering incentives, which appeals at a more emotional level.

Each of the three sales genres has a set of formulaic moves and content moves which help to realise communicative purposes. Since all three genres are letters, they exhibit a letter form and have formulaic moves, such as openings and closings. The formulaic moves of each genre seem to have a fixed position. These moves are mainly used to indicate the letter-writing conventions and some indicate the specific genre as well.

Each genre tends to have its own sequence of content moves to organise ideas. However, some moves seem to have a rather fixed position, while others seem to be flexible and can occur in more than one place. In addition, there are split moves such as 'offering incentives', and embedded moves such as 'evaluating the product or service'. Similar kinds of splitting and embedding were also found in English sales genres discussed by Kathpalia (1992). This can be related to the complex nature of genre.

A variety of linguistic forms tends to be used to encode certain moves and steps. For example, adjectives and four-character expressions are often used to evaluate a product or service. These forms are effective strategies to give positive appraisals.

4 Accounting for the differences among the sales genres

The proposed approach also accounts for the differences among the sales genres, as these genres have certain different communicative purposes. For example, sales letters have one major communicative purpose, which is to persuade the reader to buy the product. Sales invitations have a complex purpose involving inviting and persuading the reader to attend the product exhibitions, while sales 'tongzhi' have the complex purpose of both making an implicit order and persuading the reader to buy the product. This divergence leads to three different genres.

The differences in communicative purposes result in differences at the lower levels of moves and steps. For example, formulaic moves are used in different ways. Sales invitations and sales 'tongzhi' require a formal style appropriate to the purposes of inviting or giving an implicit order. Therefore, headings are preferred in these two genres. Since sales letters try to establish a personal relationship with the reader, they are less formal. Therefore headings are not preferred, but greetings are frequently used. In addition, in 'pingxing' sales genres,

well-wishes are frequently used, while this is not the case with ‘xiaxing tongzhi’. This phenomenon is also related to the purposes of the genres. Well-wishes are not preferred in sales ‘tongzhi’, because they are not appropriate for a ‘xiaxing’ order. However, they are appropriate for invitations and sales promotions. The linguistic forms used to realise the formulaic moves are also different. For example, different forms are used as salutations in these sales genres, which correspond to the ‘pingxing’ or ‘xiaxing’ register.

There are obviously differences in content moves too. Each genre has its own typical moves and steps. For example, sales letters use requests to solicit a response and sales invitations invite the reader, while sales ‘tongzhi’ give implicit orders. Different speech acts are used in these genres to encode different communicative purpose. They also differ in the way that the moves and steps are organised. For example, a repetition of the move, ‘inviting the reader’ is frequently found in sales invitations. This also reflects the Chinese cultural practice that repeated inviting is often encouraged. Each genre also has its own sequence of moves and each sequence is recognisable as a typical sequence of the relevant genre.

The linguistic forms for each genre can also differ to encode different kind of moves, steps and communicative purposes. For example, sales letters use specific forms, such as conditional clause to encode requests, while the ‘xiaxing’ sales ‘tongzhi’ use imperative sentences to encode implicit orders and requirements.

To sum up, the above differences among the three genres indicate that these genres distinguish somewhat with varied communicative purposes, which are realised by different strategies at all levels of the text. The social contexts of these genres can help explain the purposes and why these purposes can be realised in these forms.

5 Genre and politeness strategies

As discussed in Chapter 4, politeness in Chinese is closely related to respecting others. The most frequently found strategy is the use of honorific forms. For example ‘guǐ’ (you H) is preferred in both sales letters and sales invitations. More honorific forms are found to be used in sales invitations because this is a type of ‘liyixin’ (letters of etiquette) (see Chapter 4) which requires a more polite register than sales letters. For example, many forms regarding invitation are used in honorific forms, such as jǐngqǐng (respectfully

invite), guānglín (presence H). In addition, many salutations in sales invitations also use honorific forms too.

Another politeness strategy is to borrow elements from other genres to indicate politeness and respect. As discussed in Chapter 1, 'xiaxing, pingxing and shangxing' genres are used in 'gongwen' (official letters) writing to indicate the institutional relationships between the writer and the reader. These three genres are hierarchical: 'xiaxing' is used by someone of a higher position than the reader, and 'pingxing' is written by an equal, while 'shangxing' is used by a person of a lower position than the reader. Sales letters and sales invitations belong to 'pingxing', and sales 'tongzhi' to 'xiaxing'. Although these institutional relationships are quite fixed, the writers of these genres sometimes tend to use forms from another genre to lower their status to indicate a polite linguistic distance. This phenomenon can also be discussed in relation to social context and communicative purposes.

Each genre seems to have its own principles of using elements from another genre. 'Pingxing' sales letters tend to use 'shangxing' forms to refer to the reader in order to achieve a polite image. Since 'shangxing' lexical items can indicate more respect than 'pingxing', some of them are deliberately used for this purpose. 'Shangxing' forms are also found in sales invitations. Sales 'tongzhi', however, use 'pingxing' forms to indicate the polite image of a superior, while 'shangxing' forms are seen as inappropriate when they occur in this genre.

Why is such borrowing an accepted practice in sales genres, and also possibly in other types of letter writing and other genres of communication? This question can be answered from two perspectives. First of all, the current social context encourages the writer to have a polite and respectful image, and borrowing elements from another genre can be used as a strategy to achieve this image. Secondly, this question can be answered by referring to Chinese cultural values. In many communicative situations, the position of people involved is very important. There is always a tendency for each person to find out his/her own position in relation with other people. The person of higher social rank is always to be respected by a person from a lower level. In a culture like this, it is quite common for the speaker or writer to raise the addressee or the reader's position, and sometimes degrade his/her own position as a means of indicating politeness and respect.

However, there is always a limit to how high one can raise the position of the reader, because this practice is only a communicative strategy to indicate the addresser's respect, and does not really mean actually raising the level of the addressee. Therefore, the addresser has to be in control of genre borrowing. For example, in each of the sales genres, only the appropriate forms of the immediately lower level are used. One cannot really use 'shangxing' forms to indicate politeness in 'xiaxing' genre, because this would mean turning the writer-reader relationship upside down. One can only be in control of using elements from other genres on the basis of well-defined formal schemata. Otherwise, it is possible that the writer will fail to express the required level of politeness and respect.

Finally, data examined have shown that for genre borrowing, sometimes given forms are not strictly limited to a particular genre and the writer can be offered choices across genres. A proposal of this study is therefore that genre borrowing is a creative process, wherein the writer exploits what might be called "genre intertextuality". However, as noted earlier, this does not mean one can have the liberty of using any lexical items from other genres. On the contrary, one has to choose the appropriate forms to serve the communicative purpose.

In summary, both the use of honorific forms and genre borrowing can be seen as specific ways to indicate politeness in Chinese sales genres. This linguistic phenomenon also confirms Blum-Kulka and House's (1989) claim that there are different ways cross-linguistically to indicate politeness. This finding can be valuable to English-Chinese cross cultural studies.

6 Implications for business Chinese teaching and language teaching in general

The results of this study may have some implications for business Chinese teaching and even language teaching in general. By discussing the textbook approaches, this study has shown that textbooks often fail to give a full account of the communicative purposes of the genres they teach. The problem with textbook approaches is also shown in the results of questionnaires and interviews conducted by this study. Since the students base their views on textbook advice, they do not attain a full understanding of the communicative purposes or writing conventions of genres, as demonstrated by practitioners. In contrast, the managers understand the communicative purposes much more systematically because they base their

views on their own experience of writing and reading sales genres. This finding provides further evidence for our claim that textbook advice often fails to reflect current business writing practice.

There can be two ways to solve the above problem. The first is to use authentic materials for textbooks. Instead of using idealised examples, textbooks should include authentic examples to reflect business writing practice. However, before teaching the writing of a certain genre, the teacher should also try to improve the background knowledge of the students, by providing, for example, information relating to the writer-reader relationship, marketing knowledge and so on. This will help the students construct their own world schemata as a prelude to understanding the communicative purposes of the relevant genre.

The second way would be to integrate expert members' views into teaching different types of writing, as illustrated in the detailed analysis of letters in this thesis (Chapters 4-6). This would help the students construct formal schemata, and allow them to understand general expectations about writing the genre. For example, the students would be exposed to various types of authentic letters. It is not enough to know what forms can be used, but rather what forms are considered to be more effective than others, and why. This can be a practical way to teach the students how to write and communicate effectively. These issues are discussed in more detail in Zhu (1997b, 1997c).

7 Suggestions for further research

We end the study by emphasising that communicative purposes can be used as a reliable starting point to study genre, and the development of genre can be studied in relation to social context. In this way, we can examine systematically the dynamic nature of genre as well effective ways of communication. We hope that this study will be of value to genre study, intercultural communication, and the teaching of business correspondence.

We think future research can be conducted to extend this study. First of all, further research is needed to explore the so-called AIDA phenomenon. Although full analysis of AIDA is not incorporated into my approach to study the Chinese sales genres, I have not been able to avoid discussing this phenomenon, because it has been found to be relevant to the analysis of sales letters, and in the other genres to a certain degree. I have given some explanation to its appearance, but further research is still required. Systematic research needs

to be undertaken to study this phenomenon. Questions such as these can be explored: Does AIDA represent a western influence? Or is it a pure reflection of the economic structure? Or is it the combination of both?

Another area that needs further research is cross-regional studies of written genres in Chinese business communication. This study has been confined to business communication in mainland China. The findings so far indicate that the change in economic structure is an important factor influencing business writing practice. However, there are also other types business genres used in other Chinese-speaking countries or regions, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, etc. A similar approach could be used to conduct further research to explore issues such as: (1) To what extent would the findings of this study reflect Chinese business communication in general? (2) How are business genres typically written in these additional communities? Once this research is done, we can obtain a holistic view of the written forms of Chinese business communication.

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Appendix 1. Letters from the corpus

1 Sales letters

Letter 9

亲爱的计算机用户，

您好！

您想用最优惠的价格买一台功能卓越，品质优良，外观精美的后备 500VA 的 UPS 吗？它还具备下面与众不同的特性：

可以直流起动；

具有 PS232 通讯接口，可与各种 UPS 监控系统配制；

具有稳压功能；

输入电压范围广，可从 160-250V；

具有电池保护功能；

通过美国 UL，德国 TUV 测试，安全可靠；

为了感谢广大用户一年来对产品的厚爱，同时也使你们的计算机得到最可靠的保护，我们从9月21日-12月31日对 500VA 进行优惠。

原价：1790 元

优惠价：1380 元！！！！

您现在一定想知道这是什么牌子的 UPS？当然是 UPSONIC 创力美国最新技术结晶，具有二十余年的生产历史，产品型号从 100VA 至 600KVA，PCM-50R (后备 500VA) 是其中最杰出的代表，也将成为您最明智的选择。

优惠期仅有短短的3个月，如果您有兴趣，请您可以：

直接打电话至我公司；

将回条传真至我公司；

将回条邮寄至我公司。

注意：优惠期仅至12月31日。

XXX 测控公司

1993年10月8日

尊敬的经理先生,

作为同行,我们都很关心电脑界的现状以及生存发展面临的共同问题,希望能与您共同探讨,寻求共识与合作机会。

我国计算机经过多年的发展,现微机装机量早已超过百万台。计算机作为信息社会的产物,据国内外统计,50%左右用于企事业信息管理系统(MIS),MIS水平是代表企业现代化的标志,是参加国际竞争和提高整体效益的重要手段。所以,大家都很重视,市场是很大的。

但目前无论用户或者公司都遇到不少问题。

首先,从用户的需求来看,MIS是主要用途之一。但MIS是一项技术性,社会性都很强的系统工程,比较复杂,涉及我国企业管理体制与方法的一次革命。除国际上共存的软件困扰,软件危机的共性问题以外,在我国又遇到改革开放,市场经济,管理机制,各种财,税,金融制度的不断变革,对MIS得需求不断变化的特性问题。面对这样的冲击和挑战,长期以来MIS软件开发的思想,技术,方法都没有重大突破,无法承受需求多变的挑战,不少企业MIS建设步履艰难,而处于瘫痪或中途夭折境地。开始规划很大,设想很好,建网配机,但由于应用软件开发维护困难,网络实际开通率很低,很多计算机也只作为打字机用,非常可惜。计算机在企业领导眼中成了“花费多,见效慢”的投资大户,正如机电部计算机司杨天行司长所说:“在推广应用贯彻‘软件先行,硬件及时到位’的原则,这是花了很大学费买来的经验”。广大用户也越来越认识到软件的重要性。

其次,关贸总协定即将恢复,销售也发生变化,靠已往单纯销售兼容机或代理外国名牌机的日子,随着税改,竞争的加剧,生意也越来越难作,利也越来越薄。

从上述用户需求的变化和公司经营形势发展来看,及早调整方向,出路有两条,或有实力拿出自己产品,或增加技术支持服务含量,形成软硬件成套销售或成套工程承包,使用户投资后解决快速投运见效问题,公司也易获得客户信任与高的增值,是公司发展的明智之举。

我公司的GCMIS产品为我们共同发展提供了良好的合作机会。GCMIS在九三年底通过了由行业领导和国内外专家参加的技术鉴定,获得了极高评价。一

致公认：GCMIS 对我国 MIS 发展中长期存在的开发周期长，后期维护难，使用功能不强和应变能力差，以及广大企管人员无法自主地利用电脑来提高管理水平的四大关键问题进行了成功的突破。鉴定会的盛况是空前的，与会者发言争先恐后，一致认为：GCMIS 在 MIS 软件开发工具有重大突破，创新，有重大理论与推广应用价值，GCMIS 处于国内领先，世界先进水平。中央电视台，中央人民广播电台的全国新闻联播及人民日报等中央各大报纸都相继作了报导，认为 GCMIS 标志我国 MIS 发展的一个新阶段，它的推广必将开拓我国 MIS 应用新局面。

GCMIS (单机/网络版) 五大主要特点：

- 1 成功地解决了“直接面向”问题。是使广大企管人员无需编程，就能自主开发维护和使用的深入浅出的超级“傻瓜”软件。
- 2 全新的系统自生功能。超越程序生成器的概念，半小时就能创建一个管理系统，通用性广，可塑性好，适应性强。
- 3 独创的系统自改功能。十分钟内完成系统维护修改，解决了 MIS 软件长期存在后期维护的老大难问题，并有利于系统的不断优化和完善，使其具有永久的生命力。
- 4 经历十年的努力，高度抽象概括提炼了各行各业的 MIS 业务特点，用现代管理的思想和方法，开发了一个功能强大并具有快速应变能力的 MIS 基础功能平台。试图用程序生成器生成这样深层的 MIS 平台功能是完全不可能的。
- 5 网络板本按分布式系统，客户机/服务器思路设计，并具有实时/非实时等数据共享的实用功能。网络板“向下兼容”好，单机开发的应用成果可以立刻连网工作，解决了“建网容易，应用困难，连通率低”的窘境。
(详见每期“计算机世界”，“中国计算机报”的 GCMIS 广告)
如贵公司对 MIS 极其网络有兴趣，有实力，那么加上 GCMIS，可使贵公司：1. 投入少，利润产出高；2. 有力促进以软带硬，软硬件成套销售，使用户拿回去就能用，投入产出快，感到放心满意，也有利于提高贵公司形象，增加用户；3. 如有能力成套工程承包交钥匙，利润增值更大，GCMIS 使您的工程脱手快，且消除了没完没了的后期维护之忧……

如贵公司对 MIS 及其网络有兴趣，有实力，加上 GCMIS，可使贵公司：1. 投入少，利润产出高；2. 有力促进以软带硬，软硬件成套销售，使用户拿回去就能用，投入产出快，感到放心满意，也有利于提高贵公司形象，增加用户；3. 如有能力成套工程承包交钥匙，利润增值更大，GCMIS 使您的工程脱手快，且消除了没完没了的后期维护之忧……

GCMIS 网络版公布后，电子工业部只花十天时间，利用 GCMIS 开发了十九个管理项目，使部长楼的 NOVELL 网迅速投入运行。现全国各地也纷纷来信，来函，为此，我们准备在全国各个省市迅速发展一批代理，希望您能慎重考

虑，欢迎来人考察和了解，一旦看准，当机立断，抓住机遇，捷足先登，机不可失，失不再来。

盼精诚合作，共塑辉煌！

祝事业发达！

XXX

XXX高科技发展公司

1994年10月8日

2. Sales invitations

Letter 6

**国际银行，金融技术及设备展览会
国际电脑，仪器，仪表，展览会
邀请函**

敬启者，

中国经济急促发展，各工商业必须提高其技术以增强本身的竞争能力。为满足有关工商业之要求，“国际银行，金融技术及设备展览会，Banking China '93”及“国际电脑，仪器，仪表展览会，China Computer Show 93”将于十二月份在北京同时举行。我司诚意邀请贵司派员前往参观。

是次展会规模庞大，参展商来自十多个国家和地区，如美国，德国，日本，英国，新加坡，澳洲，韩国，意大利，台湾，中国，香港等等。世界著名之银行保安，电脑，通信，自动化设备商将展出最新之金融之银行及其他工商业的先进技术设备。随函附上展商资料以供参考。

此外，澳洲，新加坡，美国科罗拉多州及新泽西州商会更会组织展团参展。

是次展会将展出各应用于银行及金融界的最新设备及系统，例如自动柜员机，自动存款机，现金管理系统，印钞机，点钞机，银行专用计算机系统及周边设备，区域网络系统及周边设备，POS网络控制，证券交易系统，金融资讯系统，国际银行系统，金库门，夹万保险柜，入室保安系统，警钟系统，银行专用软件，信用卡分辨设备/验证系统，通信系统及设备，影象处理系统，办公室自动化设备，自动邮件处理系统等等。

在同场的电脑，仪器，仪表展当中，也会展出世界各地先进的电脑科技，包括先进大气研究系统及各种规模的计算机，由掌上电脑至大型中枢电脑，各项工业用微机，专用与通用计算器，零售业专用 POS 货品管理网络系统，商用收款机，各种软件商品，智能终端机，工作站及信息管理系统等等。

通过这次展会，贵公司能会晤来自十多个以上国家和地区共超过七十多个制造商和供应商，洽谈合作计划，并欢迎作现场展品留购。

此外，同场也会举行多场技术交流会，使参观者能进一步了解各参展商的先进科技产品。

我司诚意邀请贵公司的管理及科技代表莅临参观是次展览，现谨寄上请柬，请届时携带请柬往国际展览中心办理入场手续。

如需任何进一步资料，可联络展览服务有限公司北京办事处：

XXX 小姐

中国国际展览中心服务楼XX房间，北京XX区XX路X号

电话：XXX 传真：XXX

祝

大安

XXX展览服务有限公司

1993 年 10 月

附件：展商名单

请柬

Letter 2

邀请书

XX机器厂主要生产XX电光式自动雕刻机，机器经特殊的设计以最新式电子回路，电脑装置以及特殊钢材精制而成，经得起长时间的操作，24小时不停的使用，构造最坚固，体积最小(Ys220型)全重仅有31kg，移动方便，不占空间，只要有一小桌就可放置使用。雕刻最精密，雕刻精度达3M，M方形面积之内，刻出四个字，只要你能写出，划出，任何精密细字，花样都能雕刻出来，操作最简便，将稿纸，雕刻物放好，电脑开关一按，就可全自动雕刻出你所需的字体或花样，而无需调整雕刻出凹体或凸体，可现寸雕刻及缩小雕刻，字格板最齐全，种类多达四十余种，有圆形，角形，长方形，实用之字格板且四十余种全部附带外，常用尺寸可无限供应，刀具用钝之后可直接寄来本厂，本厂将以最快的速度代你磨好你所需要的雕刻刀。现本厂在南京虹桥展览馆内设长期办事机构，敬请各位前来参观，面谈。

本公司将于1993年12月1-7日参加在南京XX路XX号(虹桥国际商务中心)举行的(台湾综合机械设备展示会)，届时，台湾公司将派员亲临南京代表处，现场演示与咨询，欢迎贵公司前来参加，交流。

电话：XXX

此致

敬礼

XXX国际企业有限公司

业务主管：XXX

3. Sales 'tongzhi' (circulars)

Letter 6

CECDB '93 英文版 CD-ROM 光盘入库企业 进入 CECDB '94 中文版, 英文版及 CD-ROM 光盘版数据的 紧 急 更 新 通 知

负责同志,

中国企业、公司及产品数据库 (英文简称 CECDB) 是在国家科委主持下, 由中国科学技术信息研究所 (国家科委信息中心) 联合国内外信息发行机构主建的。该数据库通过微机板, 网络板, 光盘板等方式在国内外发行。CECDB, 以准确的检索方式, 迅速的传输功能, 为入库企业源源不断地传送着信息, 为全世界用户提供检索服务。作为有效的广告手段和可靠的商情来源, CECDB 有力地促进了国内外产品贸易和各种合作。该库获得国家科委科技进步三等奖和国家科技情报成果一等奖。贵单位的信息经我们翻译加工已进入 CECDB '93 英文版 CD ROM 光盘, 并由世界上最大的信息出版集团 Reed-Elsevier 和专门从事中国亚洲事务的 Sino-Asia Group 联合出版并在全世界范围内公开发行, 并通过我所和美国 BDI 集团组建的 AsiaInfor Inc. 在美国联网服务。

现在, CECDB '94 年中英文版的更新征稿已经开始, 请接到此通知的单位按如下要求办理入库更新手续。

(1) 补充修改中英文数据, 特别注意通讯方式的更新。请贵单位指定专人与我方联系有关事宜, 并填写在“数据库联系人”一栏内。

(2) 填写时, 请尽量使中英文对照一致。若英文填写实在困难, 请将修改过的中文数据速寄我所, 由我所代译。

(3) 交纳一次性入库费 500 元。已交费入库企业各年度免费更新数据, 若经费困难, 可申请暂缓交费。

(4) 工作单务请在 12 月 30 日前寄至我所, 以便贵单位提供的数据及时进入 94 年发行的 CECDB '94 各类新版。

(5) 希望所有接到通知的单位认真修改补充更新单, 以便贵企业能在世界用户面前展示最新信息, 使广大用户准确无误地与您联系各种业务。

谢谢合作!

工作单寄至(通信联系地址): XXX

电话: XXX

传真: XXX

帐号: XXX

XXX科学信息研究所

1993年10月10日

关于向各会员单位征集稿件和广告的通知

各有关会员单位,

一九九四年秋季“中国出口商品交易会”将于十月十五日在广州举行。这是展示我国改革开放和建设有中国特色社会主义伟大成就的隆重盛会。这次交易会将实行“省市组团, 商会组馆, 馆团结合, 行业布展”的改革。

为配合秋交会改革, 扩大中国企业和商品在国内外的影响, 促进中国企业与世界经贸界的交往与合作, 中国五矿国际广告展览公司编辑出版了“中国五金矿产”英文专刊第十六期。

“中国五金矿产”专刊是具有一定规模和影响的五金矿业产品进出口贸易专业性杂志。十六开本, 每年两期, 每期印数一万册。发行范围: 世界各主要五金矿产品进出口商, 中国驻各国使馆经商处, 我国在海外的各主要从事五金矿产品的贸易公司, 参加广交会的各国贸易代表团, 客商和国内各对外贸易公司。该刊发行以来, 在促进销售, 扩大出口方面, 取得较好的效果, 得到了各国贸易界人士的广泛关注, 成为了解中国五矿贸易的重要参考材料。

为了加强秋交会五矿行业的整体宣传效果, 促进扩大出口成交, 我们希望你们在该刊上刊登企业形象或商品广告, 展示公司的业绩, 宣传公司的商品, 让世界五金矿产贸易界人士了解你公司的实力和开展对外交往的诚意。

有意者请径与中国五矿国际广告公司联系。该刊将对我会会员实行优惠。

XXX五矿化工进出口商会办公室

一九九四年 7 月 19 日

Appendix 2. Questionnaires

1. Questionnaire on Chinese sales letters

推销信调查表

姓名_____ 年龄 _____ 性别 _____ 专业_____ 工作经历_____ 职业 _____

1 请就下列推销信交流目的发表看法，选择合适的重要程度：

(1) 树立积极的公司形象

- | | | | |
|---|------|---|-----|
| A | 非常重要 | B | 重要 |
| C | 不太重要 | D | 不重要 |

(2) 引起读者兴趣

- | | | | |
|---|------|---|-----|
| A | 非常重要 | B | 重要 |
| C | 不太重要 | D | 不重要 |

(3) 说服读者购买产品

- | | | | |
|---|------|---|-----|
| A | 非常重要 | B | 重要 |
| C | 不太重要 | D | 不重要 |

2 请把下列推销信目的按重要程度标上等级 (1-3)。No. 3 代表最重要，No. 1 代表最不重要。

树立积极的公司形象 _____

引起读者兴趣 _____

说服读者购买产品 _____

3 你认为推销信是否要标题？为什么？

4 书信者应如何称呼对方：用公司单位名称，还是称“公司负责人”等其他个人头衔？请标明 (√, ×):

公司单位名称 _____ 个人头衔 _____

5 你认为推销信是否应要开头称谓，寒暄语以及尾语致词？请标明 (√, ×):

开头称谓 _____

寒暄语 _____

尾语致词 _____

6 请把下列开头称谓分别标上相应的等级(1-8)。No. 8 代表最合适的等级， No. 1 代表最不合适的等级。

亲爱的用户 _____

公司单位名称 _____

尊敬的女士先生们 _____

朋友们 _____

负责同志 _____

敬启者 _____

姓名头衔 _____

姓名头衔先生 _____

7 请把下列读者称谓分别标上相应的等级(1-8)。No. 8 代表最合适的等级， No. 1 代表最不合适的等级。

您 _____

贵公司 _____

你 _____

你公司 _____

您们 _____

阁下 _____

你们 _____

有意者 _____

8 请说明下列两项内容应写在信的什么地方？

介绍产品 _____

请求读者回信 _____

9 阅读已编号的五封推销信。阅后在下面空格内填上相应的得分 (1-5)。最高分 (5) 代表最成功的信。最低分 (1) 代表最不成功的信。

信件 No.1 _____

信件 No.2 _____

信件 No.3 _____

信件 No.4 _____

信件 No.5 _____

10 简单说明:

我选择信件 No. _____ 为最成功的推销信，因为:

我选择信件 No. _____ 为最不成功的推销信，因为:

Questionnaire on Sales Letters (the translated version)

1 Please choose the appropriate degrees for the following communicative purposes of sales letters.

(1) Achieving a positive public image

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| A. Very important | B. Important |
| C. Not very important | D. Not important |

(2) Attracting the reader's interest

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| A. Very important | B. Important |
| C. Not very important | D. Not important |

(3) Persuading the reader to buy the product

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| A. Very important | B. Important |
| C. Not very important | D. Not important |

2 Rank the order of importance (1-3) of the communicative purposes.

Achieving a positive public image _____

Attracting the reader's interest _____

Persuading the reader to buy the product _____

3 Do you think a sales letter should have a heading? Why? Or why not?

4 When the sales letter is directed to a company, should the writer address the reader by the name of the company, or by the personal titles? Please indicate (✓, ×):

By the name of the company _____

By the personal titles _____

5 Do you think that salutations, greetings and well-wishes should be included in a sales letter? Please indicate in the following table (✓, ×):

salutation _____

greetings _____

well-wishes _____

6 Please grade (1-8) the following salutations in the following space. No. 8 represents the most appropriate rank, and No. 1 the least.

the company's name _____

dear customers _____

respected ladies and gentlemen _____

person in charge _____

respected reader _____

surname + title _____

friends _____

surname + title + gentlemen _____

7 Rank the following eight address terms used as reader references, No. 8 is the most appropriate and No. 1 is the least:

you (H) _____

your (H) company _____

you _____

your company _____

you (pl. H) _____

your Excellency _____

you (pl.) _____

anyone interested _____

8 Please indicate where the following two items should be placed in the letter.

Introducing the product _____

Requesting the reader to respond _____

9 Please read the five letters given to you (No. 1 - No. 5), and grade (1-5) them afterwards.

Grade 5 indicates the most successful letter, and Grade 1 the least.

Letter 1 _____

Letter 2 _____

Letter 3 _____

Letter 4 _____

Letter 5 _____

10 Explain briefly:

I graded Letter _____ as the most successful sales letter, because:

I graded Letter _____ as the least successful sales letter, because:

2 Questionnaire on Chinese sales invitations

推 销 邀 请 信 调 查 表

姓名_____ 年龄 _____ 性别 _____ 专业_____ 工作经历_____ 职业 _____

1 请就下列推销邀请信写作交流目的发表看法，选择合适的重要程度：

(1) 与读者建立关系

- | | | | |
|---|------|---|-----|
| A | 非常重要 | B | 重要 |
| C | 不太重要 | D | 不重要 |

(2) 引起读者兴趣

- | | | | |
|---|------|---|-----|
| A | 非常重要 | B | 重要 |
| C | 不太重要 | D | 不重要 |

(3) 说服读者购买产品

- | | | | |
|---|------|---|-----|
| A | 非常重要 | B | 重要 |
| C | 不太重要 | D | 不重要 |

2 请把下列推销邀请写作交流目的按重要程度标上等级 (1-3)。No. 3

代表最重要，No. 1 代表最不重要。

与读者建立关系 _____

引起读者兴趣 _____

说服读者购买产品 _____

3 推销邀请信是否要标题？为什么？

4 书信者应如何称呼对方：称公司单位名称，还是称“公司负责人”等其他个人头衔？请标明 (√, ×):

公司单位名称 _____ 个人头衔 _____

5 你认为推销邀请信是否应要开头称谓，寒暄语以及尾语致词？请标明 (√, ×):

开头称谓 _____

寒暄语 _____

尾语致词 _____

6 请把下列开头称谓分别标上相应的等级(1-6)。No. 6 代表最合适的等级, No. 1 代表最不合适的等级。

公司单位名称 _____
敬启者 _____
姓名头衔 _____
负责同志 _____
尊敬的女士先生们 _____
无读者称谓 _____

7 请把下列读者称谓分别标上相应的等级(1-8)。No. 8 代表最合适的等级, No. 1 代表最不合适的等级。

您 _____	贵公司 _____
你 _____	你公司 _____
您们 _____	阁下 _____
你们 _____	有意者 _____

8 请说明下列两项内容应写在信的什么地方?

介绍展览会 _____
邀请读者 _____
宣传展销会产品及规模 _____

9 请阅读已编号的五封推销邀请邀请信。阅后在下面空格内打上相应的得分 (1-5)。最高分 (5) 代表最成功的信, 最低分 (1) 代表最不成功的信。

信件 No.1 _____
信件 No.2 _____
信件 No.3 _____
信件 No.4 _____
信件 No.5 _____

10 简单说明:

我选择信件 No. _____ 为最成功的推销邀请信, 因为:

我选择信件 No. _____ 为最不成功的推销邀请信, 因为:

Questionnaire on Sales Invitations (the translated version)

1 Please choose the appropriate degrees for the following communicative purposes of sales invitations.

(1) Establishing relationships with the reader

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| A. Very important | B. Important |
| C. Not very important | D. Not important |

(2) Attracting the reader's interest

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| A. Very important | B. Important |
| C. Not very important | D. Not important |

(3) Persuading the reader to buy the product

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| A. Very important | B. Important |
| C. Not very important | D. Not important |

2 Rank the order of importance (1-3) of the communicative purposes.

Establishing relationships with the reader _____

Attracting the reader's interest _____

Persuading the reader to buy the product _____

3 Do you think a sales invitation should have a heading? Why? Or why not?

4 When a sales invitation is directed to a company, should the writer address the reader by the name of the company, or by the personal titles? Please indicate (✓, ×):

By the name of the company _____

By the personal titles _____

5 Do you think that salutations, greetings and well-wishes should be included in a sales invitation? Please indicate in the following table (✓, ×):

salutation _____

greetings _____

well-wishes _____

6 Please grade (1-6) the following salutations in the following space. No. 6 presents the most appropriate rank, No. 1 the least.

the company's name _____
respected reader _____
surname+title _____
respected ladies and gentlemen _____
person in charge _____
Ø salutation _____

7 Rank (1-8) the following eight address terms used as reader references. No. 8 is the most appropriate and No. 1 is the least:

you (H) _____	your (H) company _____
you _____	your company _____
you (pl. H) _____	your Excellency _____
you (pl.) _____	anyone interested _____

8 Please indicate where the following two items should be placed in the letter.

Introducing the exhibition _____
Inviting the reader _____
Describing the exhibition or exhibits _____

9 Please read the five sales invitations given to you (No.1 - No.5), and grade (1-5) them afterwards. Grade 5 indicates the most successful letter, and Grade 1 the least.

Letter 1 _____
Letter 2 _____
Letter 3 _____
Letter 4 _____
Letter 5 _____

10 Explain briefly:

I graded Letter _____ as the most successful sales invitation, because:

I graded Letter _____ as the least successful sales invitation, because:

3 Questionnaire on sales ‘tongzhi’ (circulars)

推销通知调查表

姓名_____ 年龄_____ 性别_____ 专业_____ 工作经历_____ 职业_____

1 请就下列推销通知写作交流目的发表看法，选择合适的重要程度：

(1) 宣传书信者的权威性

- | | | | |
|---|------|---|-----|
| A | 非常重要 | B | 重要 |
| C | 不太重要 | D | 不重要 |

(2) 树立积极的公司形象

- | | | | |
|---|------|---|-----|
| A | 非常重要 | B | 重要 |
| C | 不太重要 | D | 不重要 |

(3) 引起读者兴趣

- | | | | |
|---|------|---|-----|
| A | 非常重要 | B | 重要 |
| C | 不太重要 | D | 不重要 |

(4) 说服读者购买产品

- | | | | |
|---|------|---|-----|
| A | 非常重要 | B | 重要 |
| C | 不太重要 | D | 不重要 |

2 请把下列推销通知的写作交流目的按重要程度标上等级 (1-3)。No. 3 代表最重要，No. 1 代表最不重要。

- 宣传书信者的权威性 _____
- 树立积极的公司形象 _____
- 引起读者兴趣 _____
- 说服读者购买产品 _____

3 推销通知是否要标题？为什么？

4 书信者应如何称呼对方：称公司单位名称，还是称“公司负责人”等其他个人头衔？请标明 (√, ×):

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| 公司单位名称_____ | 个人头衔_____ |
|-------------|-----------|

5 你认为推销通知是否应要开头称谓，寒暄语以及尾语致词？请标明 (√, ×):

开头称谓 _____

寒暄语 _____

尾语致词 _____

6 请把下列开头称谓分别标上相应的等级(1-5)。No. 5 代表最合适的等级, No. 1 代表最不合适的等级。

公司单位名称 _____

通知常用称谓 _____

负责同志 _____

阁下 _____

无读者称谓 _____

7 请把下列读者称谓分别标上相应的等级(1-8)。No. 8 代表最合适的等级, No. 1 代表最不合适的等级。

您 _____

贵公司 _____

你 _____

你公司 _____

您们 _____

阁下 _____

你们 _____

有意者 _____

8 请说明下列三项内容应写在信的什么地方?

发推销通知的原因 _____

介绍产品 _____

含蓄明令读者 _____

9 请阅读已编号的五封推销通知 (No. 1 - No. 5)。阅后在下面空格内打上相应的 得分 (1-5)。最高分 (5) 代表最成功的信, 最低分 (1) 代表最不成功的信。

信件 No.1 _____

信件 No.2 _____

信件 No.3 _____

信件 No.4 _____

信件 No.5 _____

10 简单说明:

我选择信件 No. _____ 为最成功的推销通知, 因为:

我选择信件 No. _____ 为最不成功的推销通知, 因为:

Questionnaire on Sales ‘Tongzhi’ (Circulars) (the translated version)

1 Please choose the appropriate degrees for the following communicative purposes of sales ‘tongzhi’ (circulars).

- (1) Achieving an official status
A. Very important B. Important
C. Not very important D. Not important
- (2) Achieving a positive public image
A. Very important B. Important
C. Not very important D. Not important
- (3) Attracting the reader’s interest
A. Very important B. Important
C. Not very important D. Not important
- (4) Persuading the reader to buy the product
A. Very important B. Important
C. Not very important D. Not important

2 Rank the order of importance (1-3) of the communicative purposes.

Achieving an official status _____

Achieving a positive public image _____

Attracting the reader’s interest _____

Persuading the reader to buy the product _____

3 Do you think a sales ‘tongzhi’ should have a heading? Why? Or why not?

4 When the sales ‘tongzhi’ is directed to a company, should the writer address the reader by the name of the company, or by the personal titles? Please indicate (✓, ×):

By the name of the company _____

By the personal titles _____